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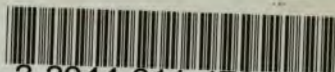
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# RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

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VON HARTMANN

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THE  
RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

BY  
EDWARD VON HARTMANN,

AUTHOR OF 'THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS.'

*Translated from the German,*

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION,

BY  
ERNEST DARE.

LONDON:  
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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE following pages are reprinted here without material alterations from the First Edition. The time which has elapsed since their composition was too short for getting any fresh views about the questions considered in them. They evoked no criticisms worthy of notice, when first published singly in the Leipsic weekly Journal, *Literature*, edited by Paul Wislicenus; and the first collected publication of them, consisting of two thousand copies, was bought up within eight weeks. Accordingly, there has not been any interval long enough to enable me to give an answer to some of the more important rejoinders, by issuing a fresh Edition with elucidations and additions. Some political and ecclesiastical Journals hastened to criticise the First Edition, but failed to bring any weightier arguments forward. Most of my critics drew a close parallel between my little book and Strauss's *The Old Faith and the New*. I, for my part, cannot complain of this parallel which writers of the most various standpoints put into prominence, nor of the censure accruing to me from the comparison with Strauss.

Indeed, I have diligently refrained from strengthening, with my voice, the chorus of hostile critics and of pamphleteers who have attacked the farewell volume of Strauss. I have contented myself with pointing out that Strauss's fundamental principles must make us class him among Liberal Protestants.



For Strauss as a critic and as an author, my respect is so great that I could not join in the outcry evoked by his *Confession*, a book which showed most clearly to the world at large that Strauss was not a philosopher,—which fact was discovered long ago by all our profound thinkers,—although some Hegelians had once declared him to be such, because, in his youth, he had followed the flag of Hegelianism. But, by close study of Strauss's writings, it was easy to see that his adhesion to Hegel was only a nominal discipleship imposed on him by the fashion of the time; and, accordingly, the striking proof of this fact which, in his old age, he afforded by his renunciation of Idealism, and by his warm partisanship with Darwinism in its latest form, was quite unnecessary. If Strauss had ever comprehended the full depth of the Hegelian Philosophy, he would necessarily have adopted a more spiritual conception of Darwin's newly-founded Doctrine of Descent, instead of enthusiastically accepting the mechanical conception of the Universe,—not, indeed, without quite inconsistently smuggling in some fragments of his former idealistic principles of Philosophy. Accordingly, it seemed superfluous to enter upon a philosophical discussion of Strauss's theories, and all the more so because he, on the one side, had shown the utter irreconcilableness of the earlier with the later elements of that cosmical conception which he put forth, and I, on the other side, had reserved my discussion of the Darwinians' mechanical theory of the Universe for a special exposition.<sup>1</sup> And equally well was I able to dispense with any account or defence of my own conception of the Universe, inasmuch as a full exposition of it is to be found in my philosophical writings. Accordingly, I have been able to avail myself of a greater concentration of subject-matter, and of a more concise handling of the religious questions belonging to the present time, all extraneous matter being excluded; but

<sup>1</sup> *Wahrheit und Irrthum im Darwinismus (Truth and Error in Darwinism)*. Berlin: C. Duncker.

no reader, who is of a reflecting turn of mind and is well acquainted with the systematic interdependence of all my opinions, will doubt that the following speculations are in essential harmony with my views, or that they are here put forward in order to furnish a new support for those views.

I do not disguise from myself the probability that my treatment of the subject will please nobody. In Germany a man who is an opponent of Christianity is generally also a bitter foe to Religion in any shape or form, and comes easily to regard with perfect contempt all persons supporting the interests of Religion as the highest interests of Humanity; in fact, he considers them to be mere dreamers or mystics. But, at this time of day, any one who still wishes to champion the cause of Religion will hardly dare to do so unless he stands upon the ground of Historical Christianity. But I, nevertheless, am attacking the orthodox, because they are Christian—that is, in our opinion, stupid; and I attack the radical opponents of Christianity,—such as Strauss,—because they are irreligious; and I attack Liberal Protestants, because they not only are irreligious, but also would still be Christians as well. That the traditional Religions are in any concrete form no longer retainable, I agree with Strauss in believing—that is, with the Strauss of *The Old Faith and the New*, not with the Strauss of *The Life of Jesus*. But I separate myself from him, by my contention that irreligious Secularism will not be permanent, and that, unless the whole of Modern Civilization is to become the prey of Ultramontanism, something new must certainly make its appearance—not an unpractical, abstract religiousness, but a new concrete form of Religion, which is founded on rational, yet profoundly spiritual principles. These bases can be supplied only by a pessimistic Pantheism which teaches the immanence of the individual soul in the one Universal Spirit, and the substantial identity of the Universal Essence with its individual manifestation. The most suggestive hints about the psychological development of such a

Monistic Religion of immanence are to be found in Biedermann's *Christian Dogma*. Biedermann, however, is still too deeply immersed in Hegelian Optimism, and labours under a delusion about Free-will, and also is incapable of dismissing the idea that his psychologically developed Essence of Religion can be fully realized in History by some radical transformation of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

I have not concealed my conviction that the new, much-needed Religion will not very speedily make its appearance, and that, consequently, a period of religious perplexity must intervene, bringing much mental anguish. Some persons, perhaps, may reproach me for not scrupling to publish my ideas, which will help to hasten on that perplexity, and to aggravate the mental anguish already existing. But I must avow that such scruples could never have deterred me from publishing any opinion which I, after mature reflection, had formed and had conscientiously felt to be true to the best of my knowledge. The unsatisfying nature of the old Faith is being felt on all sides; and people are also clearly discerning the direction in which the further development of religious thought must lead; nevertheless, we should remember that no great spiritual progress is ever accomplished without great struggles, general bewilderment and many exhibitions of deplorable excesses. Desire, if you will, to spare Mankind such struggles because of the painful convulsions which they involve, only let this forbearance mean that your condemnation of these struggles rests on the grounds of spiritual life. When, however, the proper time *has* come for throwing the firebrand

<sup>1</sup> As regards the Poets, Sallet, in his *Gospel of the Laity (Laien-evangelium)*, takes much the same view as mine. The Optimism still tolerated by Sallet becomes in Schäfer's only half pantheistic *Laien-brevier*, a repulsive, cringing humility, while in Rückert's *Wisdom of the Brahmans (Weisheit der Brahmanen)*, Pessimism is more faithfully represented, and the absence of arbitrary dependence on Christianity so utterly different in spirit, is pleasing to the reader.

under the stubble, and for preparing the field for next year's crop, cannot be determined by human calculation; we must continue to leave the determination of the time to a higher Power which guides the general destinies of Mankind. The individual, as soon as he has fulfilled his duties as an individual, can and should boldly transfer all responsibility for the consequences of his act, which are beyond his ken, to that higher Power. But the seeker after Truth may not do this before he has earnestly and honestly striven to acquire Knowledge, and submitted the results obtained to a scientific verification, and, lastly, refuse to conceal, on external grounds, from Mankind that which he holds to be true; he must, rather, without fear of men communicate all he discovers, being assured that the contribution furnished by him to Knowledge, even though it be mixed up with error, will, nevertheless, help on the development of the Truth, and by that means promote the progress of Humanity. Has a man fulfilled all these conditions? Then he need no more trouble about the reproach that he sows perplexity and inflames disputes.

Of all the various schools of Theology, the Evangelical is the least able to reject these contentions of mine, inasmuch as its own powers (and need) of development are dependent on similar arguments; therefore, to the Evangelicals every impulse—though coming from an enemy—which leads to deeper research into the essence of Religion and of Christianity, must be welcome. Indeed signs are increasing that even in orthodox-Evangelical quarters, wherever a deep and real religiousness is displayed, *two* things are being gradually comprehended which, but a few decades of years ago, scarcely any one had ventured to believe. The first is, that the old customary aversion to Pantheism conceived in a *spiritual* and not in a *naturalistic* sense, arose from a misapprehension on the part of its opponent as much as from its special contents, and that Pantheism is really a spiritual force with which,

sooner or later, Theology will have to positively reckon. The second point which has become so plain is that the shallow, irreligious Secularism of pseudo-Christian Liberal Protestantism, already stands farther removed from the deeper Christian religiousness than does a pessimistic Pantheism which cares for real Religion and which also aims at making metaphysical conceptions the bases of Morality.

Liberal Protestantism, against which Strauss so strongly set himself as if he was unaware of its assault on Christianity, will naturally recognize in me the executioner who puts the knife to its throat. But simple prudence compels it, in its criminal position, to put a good face on the matter and to seek how it may, by means of fresh verbosity, wriggle out of the toils with which my arguments encircle it.

Quite different from both Liberal Protestantism and Evangelical orthodoxy must Catholic Ultramontaniam be in the position which it takes up against me. On the one hand, it must feel flattered because I consider it to be the real representative of Historical Christianity, and also because I designate its march against Modern Civilization as the *last* attempt which will ever be made by Historical Christianity at self-preservation. But, on the other hand, how bitterly will Ultramontaniam hate me, since there is no one who has spoken harder words than I have about its *mummy-like deadness* and religious inertia after the revolt of the Protestant Reformation. It will, therefore, be interesting to reproduce here a criticism proceeding from an 'eminent' personage on my little book, which was not fully nor altogether accurately reported in the political journals. The Prince-Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal von Rauscher, lately delivered an official and solemn oration at the conclusion of some religious exercises for priests; the authentic text of this speech was printed in the *Austrian People's Friend*, and I quote here, from that source, the following passages:—'It is now asserted by the Party which recently adopted the title of "Champions of Civiliza-

tion," that the destruction of Christianity will soon be accomplished. . . . On this side of the Rhine hitherto the heralds of Enlightenment, of Liberalism, of true Humanity, or whatever else they choose to call it, have not openly renounced the bare toleration of Christianity. But the new name which, in Prussia, has been adopted by the enemies of Religion, means nothing less than an open, bitter struggle against the Belief in the Incarnate Word. Encouraged by the kindly patronage of the Law's power, they throw off the mask, and proclaim that Modern Culture imperatively demands the utter extirpation of Christianity. The Prussian Government are certainly beginning to perceive that it is easier to throw a firebrand into a house than to fix any set limits to the flames. The Prussian Government patronize so-called Liberal Protestants by whom the divinity of Christ is openly denied, and yet they object to the masses being told plainly that Protestant Christianity has come to an end, and they do not desire that Prussia should cease to be reckoned among Christian nations, for fear of the deep impression which such a state of things would make upon Germany, and also because of the very important position held in Europe by Prussia. For things have not yet come to such a pass in Europe that a Government may reckon on winning full approbation if it should adopt the Confession of Faith proclaimed by the Paris Town-Hall. Men, therefore, still lay stress—not indeed upon being Christian—but on being called "Christian," and this explains why the celebrated Minister Falk, in spite of his patronage of Christ's enemies, will not allow any Jew to be a teacher in the Protestant schools. Now, however, a number of determined Atheists have enrolled themselves under the banner of "The Philosophy of the Unconscious," who justly charge Liberal Protestantism with carrying on a scandalous imposture in that it refuses to give up the name of "Christian," to which it has really no more right than Muhammedanism, which, at all events, considers Jesus to be a prophet sent from God, and,

indeed, to be next in greatness to the One Prophet Muhammed. The leader of these Prussian Atheists is Wislicenus, the former chief of the "Enlightenment" Party, but the real leading spirit among them is Von Hartmann, the philosopher of the "Unconscious."<sup>1</sup>

This speech, uttered in blind rage at the example set by Protestant Prussia, the bearer of the banner in the great struggle of Civilization against Ultramontaniam, heaps together senseless accusations upon the Prussian Government; it denounces those who are antagonistic to Ultramontaniam and to Christianity as the 'enemies of Religion,' and it stigmatizes as a set of 'determined Atheists' those who combat the Ultramontane idea of God; but all this abuse and lamentation is such an obvious repetition of old-fashioned Jesuitical tactics that no one could be surprised at it. I only mention, for the reader's enlightenment, that the Cardinal, in this speech, confounds G. A. Wislicenus with his son, Paul Wislicenus, the editor of *Literature*, and makes the latter responsible for the utterances of a single contributor to the Journal. But the accusation brought against those who openly attack with spiritual weapons the Christian dogmas, and who believe in the speedy dissolution of Christianity (that is, in a few centuries), the accusation, I mean, that they undisguisedly renounce all toleration of Christianity, is a Jesuitical misrepresentation which can claim, at least, the advantage of being novel. For the Jesuits cannot in the remotest degree believe it possible that any party, having gained supreme power, would refrain from copying the example set by the Catholic Church,—a precedent which that Church would only too gladly set again, namely, the personal persecution of spiritual foes, and the extirpation of all such opponents by means of the rack and the stake.

I quoted these passages from the Cardinal's speech, because they show that one point in my argument has produced a stupefying effect on him. Catholic Christendom has, through

Pius the Ninth, become accustomed to the idea that 'the extirpation of Modern Civilization is the imperative demand of Christianity.' But, to use the metaphor,—that the spit should turn round,—that Modern Civilization should with necessary consistency feel that *its* imperative demand is the extirpation of Christianity, *that*, indeed, does not seem to occur to the Reverend Fathers, although it is so obvious. In fact, this manifest turning round of the wheel seems to have been the first thing which showed them, with lightning-like clearness, that no bridge can possibly be thrown across the gaping gulf which separates them from the Nineteenth Century, although, till now, they themselves were wont to be proud of this gulf, and to insolently boast of its existence. Again, that the person by whom this thought was clearly and sharply expressed in words is the veritable Antichrist, was, of course, a self-evident conclusion. Therefore, in spite of all the nonsense contained in the above-quoted passage, there is a correct scent of danger in it; and it does but utter the cry of the stag when wounded in its most vulnerable part. Ultramontanism was not concerned about the fact that Protestantism was hastening to spontaneous decomposition. It knew well enough that the State could not impart lasting life to Protestantism, if the latter were unable to support itself on internal elements of a strongly anti-Christian nature; and it felt certain that the Materialism of one generation is the surest means of driving the next into its fold, outside which no man can be saved. Only one thing has Ultramontanism always dreaded, namely, the union of the German character with the German spirit, that is, with the Philosophy of Germany, but it only half believed in the existence of the latter. Now, however, German Philosophy has made itself apparent to its Ultramontane foe, which, urged by the instinct of self-preservation, has turned its front towards that Philosophy, the only real and formidable opponent which it has. For only German Metaphysical Philosophy is able to bring

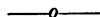


forward something positive which can overthrow Ultramontan-  
tanism. Against all else is Ultramontan-ism perfectly proof,  
for it has united within itself the two *most powerful* forces to  
be found in human nature, namely, *religious sentiment* and  
*stupidity*.

EDWARD VON HARTMANN.

BERLIN, *October* 1874:

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# THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

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## I.

### RECONSTRUCTION OR INNOVATION?

THE present age, although pre-eminent for irreligiousness, is yet remarkable on account of the ardour of religious controversy. We have emerged from a period when utter indifference was combined with mechanical adhesion to custom, when religious lukewarmness led men to ignore the fact that the traditional forms of Religion were no longer needed. Our fathers were conservative enough to acquiesce in church-going, and were sufficiently rationalistic to laugh at the idea of religious questions ever again exciting the masses; but the inconsistency in this conduct our fathers did not perceive.

Meanwhile, theological, historical and philosophical critics have been engaged in unwearyed labours (I need only mention Schopenhauer, Strauss, and Feuerbach), and modern ideas have received a tremendous impetus. So, naturally, the opinion that the traditional forms of Religion are, in all their essential points, intolerable to us with our modern conception of the Universe, has gained very wide acceptance. On the other hand, two events showed the error which enlightened persons, in their indifference, made by believing that Religion has lost its influence over the masses, and may be dispensed with. The Catholic Church, exerting itself to an extent which

inspired general horror and surprise, has proved that it is still able to rouse the masses to fanaticism by means of persistent agitation; and, as a counterpart to this, the undisguised brutality of the German Socialists, in their cosmopolitan exultation over the horrors of the Parisian Commune, displayed to us the depths of barbarity into which the masses sink, when, through discarding all Religion, they lose the only form of idealism which is accessible to them.

After such striking evidence, all who are anxious about elevating the masses to a higher stage of Culture must, surely, perceive that Religion is an indispensable element in the education of men up to a conception of the Universe, which should develop in their minds the sense of the Ideal; and, also, that if Progressive Civilization fancies that this lever—namely, Religion—may be neglected, it is only encouraging that dishonest, anti-progressive tendency which uses Religion as a cloak; and lastly, that Religion, in the form of the traditional creeds, cannot serve as a support to an epoch of intellectual development with which its fundamental principles are totally at variance.

Accordingly, the religious question waxes urgent, and much zeal is displayed in many quarters to get a Religion which, by harmonizing with the modern spirit and with the aims of our Modern Civilization, shall be fit for the mission of educating the masses up to an appreciation of the Ideal. It is natural that these efforts should be made under the cover of the traditional Religions, partly because it would be a hazardous and impracticable enterprise to begin again entirely anew, and partly because the idea of *historical continuity* has impressed itself upon the modern consciousness, as an advantage of priceless value, which nothing could replace and which ought to be preserved even at the cost of large concessions.

Nevertheless, although those persons who devote their energies to these highly important efforts will certainly gain

our private esteem, we have to ask whether the maintenance of historical continuity, in the strict sense, is possible any longer now. Are we not, in fact, standing at one of these historical crises when a vast idea, having travelled through all the phases of its Evolution, is necessarily condemned to irrevocable banishment from the stage, in order to leave the space open for other leading ideas to enter in? The old idea, however, will not be prevented from imparting to the new development some of its most important elements and furnishing with the remainder, manure—to use the metaphor—for the fresh, sprouting life. By the latter means, historical continuity would still be largely preserved, notwithstanding that the rupture with the leading principles of the previous epoch, and the admission of creative ideas imported from afar, always possess the appearance of novelty and actual revolution.

Since, however, all reforms, all new phases of development within one and the same cycle of Evolution proceed, more or less, from the introduction of germs of new ideas, and since, on the other hand, at the end of an old cycle and the beginning of a new, the fresh, creative ideas do not fall from heaven, but are to be traced back to some part of the Evolution of the earlier Civilization, we see that the two differ really only in degree—that is to say, that the essential difference between them lies in the relative measure of importance claimed by the elements preserved from the previous, uninterrupted Evolution, and by the ingredients taken out of other sources. What I mean here will be plain to any one who takes the trouble to mark the analogy which the origin of Buddhism out of Brahmanism bears, firstly to the Protestant Reformation, secondly to the origin of Christianity out of Judaism.

Still it always would be a mistake to suppose that such a difference in degree excludes a difference in kind. It is a law of Nature that *quantitative* differences, when exceeding a

certain limit, appear as *qualitative* differences (one remembers, for instance, the difference between the psychical faculties of animals and those of men), and even bring about a sharp change in quality (one calls to mind the modification of the aggregate condition of the temperature accompanying a gradual rise or fall of it). Similarly, up to a certain point, new germs of ideas can be introduced and worn-out principles can be discarded, without any apparent break being made in the historical continuity of the Evolution, but, that point once passed, the rupture with the old state becomes flagrant and the new era commences its reign.

When we apply this principle to the line of development which the Christian Idea has followed, we are confronted by the question whether there is not, at the present time, such an obvious necessity of rejecting so large an amount of the old Faith, that the remnants left are too scanty to have the stirring and exciting nature belonging to Religion. And we are also forced to ask if this very necessary act of rejection does not include, in its attack, the most important foundation-stones of the edifice of Christianity, and, therefore, make people disinclined to dwell in a building deprived of its chief props, as long as no fresh stones are put in the empty places. These reflections on the necessity of some Religion and on the impossibility of adherence to a Religion opposed to the development of Modern Civilization, will, perhaps, so distress many honest persons who are anxious about the welfare of Humanity, that, if they cannot perceive from their standpoint anything wherewith to replace the pillars which have been torn away, they will rock themselves in the illusion that a house, which has been damaged to this extent, is still sufficiently inhabitable to invite passers-by to enter in there. Such self-delusion, as we remarked before, will not lessen our personal respect for the honest efforts of these people. But scientific honour compels every man whose intellect is not perverted to this degree by his will, to keep himself free from

such self-deception, and to frankly acknowledge to himself that the religious edifice, being on every side riddled and perforated by modern criticism, has become uninhabitable. Let us hope that the recognition of its insufficiency, and of the urgent necessity of a new resting-place, will prove the sharpest stimulus to seeking and finding *somewhere else* religious ideas capable of replacing and even of surpassing those that are worn out. When a merchant, formerly rich, has become bankrupt, it is wrong of him to delude himself and his family with groundless fancies of preserved prosperity. But how is he to make the best of his position ? By accepting his case in its true plight, in order to recover himself as soon as possible through a concentration of energy more earnest than before. It, therefore, behoves *us* also to examine our books more closely, that we may find out how we stand with regard to Religion and Christianity, and may know exactly what is the difference between our present possessions and the wealth of which they form but a sorry remainder. We must ascertain, too, whether our religious needs can be satisfied by these remnants of the Christian Faith.

To prevent any misunderstanding, I must here expressly remark that I do not propose in this work to attack the fundamental doctrines of positive Christianity. I am now only addressing those readers who have already left behind them the criticism of those dogmas. But I wish to consult them about the possibility of Liberal Protestantism being in a position (as it asserts) to insure a compensation for the lost articles of faith, and also about the direction in which a real compensation—if such there be—is to be sought.



## II.

### THE HISTORICAL MISSION OF PROTESTANTISM.

ANY one who wishes to understand the real essence and nature of modern Liberal Protestantism must, above all, clearly comprehend that it is not a mere freak on the part of a few individuals which has chanced to meet with wider approval, but the necessary deduction from the Protestant theory which sprang up at the Reformation, just as Papal Infallibility forms the culmination of the Catholic principle of authority. Catholicism requires unity of belief in all essential points; she herself, in virtue of being the Church, decides what doctrines are essential and which are not. She forbids individuals to form their own decision on the subject, because such liberty would only throw the door wide open to differences of religious opinion. The infallible canonical books are the foundations of faith for the Catholic as for the Evangelical Church; since, however, the interpretation of these books admits of dispute, unity of belief can only be preserved by a method of interpretation from which there is no appeal. If this tribunal had nothing but human insight to guide it, the demand made in its name upon men 'to sacrifice their intellect' would be too gross a claim. But the Catholic Church not unjustly assumes that the Holy Ghost must be quite as much interested about giving inspiration to the interpreters of the canonical writings as about imparting it to the authors of those books, and that a Church forsaken by the Spirit, a Church which has possessed inspired confessors only at one epoch, viz. two thousand years ago or thereabouts, would be

in a veritably pitiable condition. Accordingly, the inspiration of the infallible vehicle of interpretation being admitted, it is not only superfluous to expect from the Holy Ghost the inspiration of an entire council rather than that of an individual, but there remains also the difficulty of explaining why the minority of the council were deficient in this grace of inspiration. Accordingly, it is quite logical for Catholics to regard the existing head of the Church as the infallible vehicle of interpretation, for unity of belief can best be preserved by getting one person to decide all religious questions. Granted that the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, no reason can be given why 'His Holiness' should not be able to write Bulls which are as much inspired and infallible as the Epistles of St. Peter, who was only an uneducated fisherman. Papal Infallibility, therefore, is the long-expected crowning of the unity of belief in Catholicism, and all objections to this dogma are absurd in the mouth of those who believe the Pope to be St. Peter's successor, and St. Peter to be the writer of infallibly-inspired Epistles.

Those, however, who deny the infallibility of the Church and the possibility of an inspiration conferring infallibility, who refuse to sacrifice their intellect—that is, to submit their personal convictions maturely weighed and revised to the doctrinal decisions of the Church, those who, in a word, *protest* against the absolute authority of the Church in matters of dogma, and who reserve for themselves the right of free inquiry and the liberty of religious conscience, such persons, I say, will find it hard to retain their belief in the infallibility and inspiration of the canonical books. The man who is convinced that miracles are impossible to-day, certainly plays a strange *rôle* when he asserts that they were possible eighteen hundred years ago.

The Reformers utterly failed to see that their belief in the infallibility of the canonical writings, which they had imbibed in their early childhood, rested solely on the belief in the

infallibility of the Church with its tradition which attested the Canon. Since the belief in biblical infallibility had entered, so to speak, into their very flesh and blood, the Reformers had no suspicion that their protests against the infallibility of the Church and of tradition would undermine the foundation of the Bible's infallibility; they did not anticipate that these protests would not only attack one part of the solid structure of the hierarchy, but also cause, in time, the fall of the whole edifice. They had engraved on one side of their shield the Protestant principle of free inquiry and liberty of conscience; on the other, they claimed to oppose successfully the disorganization of dogma which they had themselves begun, and to prescribe certain artificial limits to the torrent of negations. With this end in view, they promulgated under the name of formularies some doctrinal decisions dictated by their particular fancies, and they made a great fuss about the doctrines which they retained. Forsooth, they imagined that men would agree to remain in the precincts so arbitrarily traced out and would accept those formularies as barriers impassable to Reason even after the Church's authority had been destroyed, which was both infallible and also supported by perpetual inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

Even Luther felt qualms of anxiety about the reform which he had inaugurated, as is proved by some words of his uttered in his last days when he was reflecting on his life. He said, 'It is strange and very sad that after the pure doctrine of the Gospel has come again to light, the world has only become worse and worse. Every man turns his Christian liberty into fleshly wantonness. If I could justify such a course of action to my conscience, I would gladly help the Pope—in spite of all his abominations—to become our ruler again, for then the world would be ruled by strong laws and by superstition.'

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die Christliche Religion*, Stuttgart, 1870, I. Brief: 'Der Geist der Reformation.' (*Letters on the Christian Religion*, Letter I.: 'The Spirit of the Reformation.')

The Essence of Christianity was exhausted in the early Christian times and the Middle Ages. To be a Christian in these times was to oppose this life to the next with fanatical sincerity, to transfer the centre of importance from the visible to the invisible world, and, indeed, to stigmatize this present existence as a snare of the devil, who aims at decoying souls into eternal hell by means of transient pleasures. But from the time when Christianity became the Church of the State, and, therefore, a secular Power, its true nature was altered; the phenomenon was repeated which had occurred before in Buddhism, and there arose, beside *esoteric* Christianity, an *exoteric*, secular Christianity representing a degree of holiness which was recognized as lower than the other. As this exoteric party began to extend and to predominate, the esoteric fled into the retreat of orders and cloisters to keep itself pure from all worldly taint. But when Mediævalism declined, the orders and cloisters collapsed; the various attempts made, *e.g.* by Huss and by Savonarola, to bring back primitive, esoteric Christianity were baffled by the increasing alienation of the age from the Christian Idea. Finally the Reformation, by abolishing the religious orders, destroyed the empty house which had sheltered esoteric Christianity so long, and then busied itself with making secular, exoteric Christianity more secular than ever.

Although the Protestant principle, by its alliance with the Renaissance of ancient Paganism, helped on the secularization of the Christian Middle Ages which were already shaken to their foundations, yet we cannot call Protestantism '*the destroyer*' of Christianity. We must only regard it as '*the grave-digger*.' Christianity was quite dead long before it was torn to pieces by the Reformation; and the struggle made by the Catholic Church against its newly arisen rival was simply the *artificial galvanization* of a corpse. Indeed Catholicism since the Reformation has only had the *outward semblance* of life; the Catholic nations are dead spiritually, except in those quarters

where *anti-catholic* and *anti-christian* currents of thought have sprung up. The progress of Modern Civilization rests—as regards spiritual matters—exclusively on work done by Protestantism, and on these tendencies among Catholic nations which, consciously, or else unconsciously, owe their existence to the conquests of Protestantism. Catholic nations would become mere ciphers in History, just like the faithful Tibetans of the Dalai-Lama, if they were not so closely interlaced, through their geographical position, with Protestant nations; as it is, they form a standing menace to the latter, imperilling their progress in Civilization. Protestant nations are thus spurred on to a more energetic use of their powers.

When, after centuries of repression by the rack and by the stake, Protestantism breathed freely, it found the real Christian Idea dead. But, while Catholicism strove to make a mummy of this corpse and to preserve the appearance of life in it, the historical mission, which fell to the lot of Protestantism, was to dissect the body limb by limb, to officially proclaim that life was extinct, and then to solemnly bury it in order to bring thus the cycle of the Evolution of Christianity to a definite end. The work of Protestantism in relation to Christian Dogma has been wholly negative, destructive and hostile; if it has laid great stress upon some doctrines and considerably developed them, yet this was done solely to get compensation for the dogmas rejected. But the substituted doctrines have not long resisted the march of criticism and of analysis, for, in reference to such historical processes, two or three centuries cannot be called 'a long time.'

If, in theory, the Protestant principle of free inquiry guided by reason turns out to be *purely destructive*, in practice it manifests a *positive* constructive faculty, only this constructive power is not Christian. Now Christianity has a moral principle which admits of no compromise, and which demands absolute obedience to the divine will as set forth in the Bible. All else is of minor importance, for example, the

question whether certain psychological impulses as the hope of reward, the fear of punishment, love, the mystical working of grace or some such emotion, bring about by their intervention the obedience to the heteronomous commandment emanating from the divine authority. In Catholicism, the Church interposed herself as the medium between God and Man; she was, by means of popes and confessors, the bearer of the divine decision on moral questions. Protestantism puts aside this mediation and places Man directly in the presence of the Deity manifesting His will in Scripture. Thus Evangelical dogmatism does not dream of ever breaking with heteronomous Morality, nor of opposing freedom of conscience to the Deity's authority, but only to the false mediators who have interposed between the individual and God. But, in fact, Protestantism brings about a moral revolution, inasmuch as the Protestant, being unable to ascertain personally what God's will is, finds himself obliged to go to the Bible for it, and then to decide, by the light of his *autonomous conscience*, what utterances in that book are to be regarded as veritable revelations of the divine Will, and what parts have not the same importance. Thus the Protestant's conscience is exalted to the position of the supreme and sole judge in moral questions; in plain words, *moral autonomy* succeeds *moral heteronomy*. This method, of course, involves the abandonment of the Christian ethical code with its purely external authority; so, by superintending this transition from heteronomy of submission before a Law which is externally given, written down beforehand, and personified in the confessor, to the autonomy of personal moral conscience, Protestantism becomes the greatest benefactor of the masses, and forms the educational stage between blind obedience to the Law and moral self-government; in a word, the Protestant religion is the *teacher* who prepares the masses for the right use of their liberty. Without this schooling, any nation, as soon as it throws off the thralldom of Catholicism, becomes the prey of a Radicalism

which knows no duties, but only rights. As regards, therefore, the specifically Christian element (namely, the obligation to do the will of God) in Ethics, Protestantism is purely destructive just as it is subversive of the Christian theory; but, though Protestantism in the sphere of Ethics produces something new, equally positive, and also superior to that which it has now destroyed, it unfortunately deserves no compliment for skill in constructing theories, as, in that department, all its talent is exhausted in pure negation.

There is scarcely any need to remark that Protestantism performs this historical task *quite unconsciously*, and, at each stage of its progress, imagines that, in the positive remnant of dogma as yet unassailed, it possesses specific, true Christianity which has undergone purification. In order to understand the last stage of this Evolution which is working unconsciously in Protestantism, it is necessary to be an outsider, and to trace without prejudice the course of History in its different phases. That, however, the stage reached at the present time, namely, *modern Liberal Protestantism*, is the logical outcome of the Protestant theory, and has arrived, in its task of sapping Christianity, at a point where its inner emptiness and religious poverty can be no longer concealed,—that, I assert, is known already to many persons, and will soon be universally recognized. These two facts being admitted, I may claim to have demonstrated clearly what is the historical mission of Protestantism.

A historical phenomenon as vast as Christianity has been, does not, even when inwardly dead, vanish *directly* from the scene of History; its expulsion must be a gradual process, it sinks but slowly into dissolution. A contrast so marked as that which exists between Modern Civilization and the Christian Middle Ages, cannot be brought about as a sudden, direct leap from one to the other, but only as a gradual transformation; during the different stages of the change, the principal factors of the two sides are mixed together in varying proportions,

something like two dissolving views on the same curtain, one of which grows clearer while the other grows ever more dim. Protestantism is nothing else but the bridge to be crossed on the road between defunct, genuine Christianity and Modern Thought; these two systems are diametrically opposed to each other on all important points, and, therefore, is Protestantism a mass of contradictions from beginning to end. But what else could it be when it torments itself during every phase of its life to reconcile the irreconcilable?

Catholicism, after a lengthy torpor, is now trying to revive her internal strength, and, with remarkable courage and consistency, declares, in the Syllabus and the Encyclical Letter, war to the knife against all Modern Civilization, against everything which we regard as the most splendid conquests of Modern Progress; Catholicism, I affirm, has always seen through the illogical position and fatal self-contradictions of Protestantism. It has always been known in Catholic circles that the Protestant theory must necessarily lead to the self-disintegration of Protestantism; and Catholics have had mischievous satisfaction in noticing the advent of this inevitable result. Assuredly, it is no mere coincidence that Catholicism is putting forth its last efforts for the consolidation and concentration of its power at the very time when Protestantism is occupying itself with drawing the ultimate conclusions of *its* theory, and has become so exhausted in the task of *dechristianizing* Christianity, and reducing it to an empty name, that it can make no farther progress. Also the conservative tendencies in Protestantism display more and more their glaring inconsistency with the Protestant theory, and are on the eve of losing the last remnant of their credit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare with this chapter, Paul de Lagarde, Doctor of Theology and Ordinary Professor at Göttingen, *Ueber das Verhältniss des deutschen Staats zu Theologie, Kirche, und Religion* (*The Relation of the German State to Theology, Church, and Religion*). Göttingen: Dieterich, 1873, especially pages 16-23 and 41.



### III.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN CIVILIZATION.

No Religion, by its very essence, has any inclination for Science, and Christianity is opposed not only to Science, but also to all Civilization. Religion is an affair of the feelings; and although it needs ideas as foundations for the feelings, yet these ideas must be as little abstract as possible, and the reverse of distinct or definite. Indeed, an idea, which is intended to rouse the religious feelings, should be intuitive, figurative, fantastic, and confused to the last degree. Science exposes the obscure character of the imagination's fantasies, and is, therefore, tabooed in those quarters where religious feeling still burns with unextinguished ardour. Science destroys the historical foundations and connections claimed by every Religion; for there is no doubt that fantasy has had full play in the origin of all Religions; and scientific, historical criticism cannot help pointing out how weak and unreliable the supposed historical foundations are in which Religion trusts. In so far as the circle of religious ideas encroaches upon the domain of Metaphysics and Philosophy, its intimate union with the imagination renders it fantastic, and its uncritical character plunges it into contradictions causing a confusion of idea and image; but Science exhibits the incompatibility of these contradictory elements.

Accordingly, the true and unadulterated religious feeling, as long as it still has strength enough to consider Religion to be the one important thing in life, besides which all else dwindles into insignificance, strives with all its force to pre-

vent Science from intruding; for it feels instinctively that Science will be no friend, but a foe and an antagonist. Religion will not permit any historical criticism of the alleged facts, which are the basis of its faith; nor will it listen to any philosophical criticism of its metaphysical conceptions, nor does it allow the cold breath of abstract thought to play upon the heat of its internal life. Briefly, Religion claims to be the one thing needful, and transforms intellectual elements only to suit its needs, while Science models them as rational considerations demand. Religion, being a self-confident feeling which ignores all Science, is able to digest, without inconvenience, the grossest contradictions (Tertullian says: '*Certum quia impossibile*'); but, as soon as Religion gives admission to Science, it finds itself compelled to patch up the existing contradictions with sophistries which, however, after a time, always burst.

Although, in spite of this profound aversion of Religion for Science, a marriage-union takes place between them, and a child, namely, Theology, is born to the parents, yet on the part of Religion—the wife—this is a compulsory marriage, an embrace which she could not avoid. But, when convinced that there was an absolute necessity for the union, she tried to derive from it the greatest possible advantage for herself by making her husband—Science—her advocate against external foes and opponents. What makes Religion cling to Science is the simple fact that many men are not religious. Science, moreover, exists, whether Religion likes it or no, and threatens religiousness with still greater danger if Religion refuses to fight the duel with scientific weapons. It is the existence of a scientific, anti-religious polemic, which compels Religion to take Science into its service as an apologist.

But the weapon is soon found to cut both ways; as soon as Science in the form of Theology has been accepted by Religion, it commences to pursue its own ends with its own means, without any scruples about imperilling the interests of

Religion instead of promoting those interests. At first, indeed, Theology affirms, with perfect sincerity, that there is complete harmony between its own aims and those of Religion; but, after some time, the antagonism always appears. And then great efforts are made to plaster up the breach, and the attempt succeeds for a while, either through a relaxation of religious ardour, or thanks to the perfection of theological sophistries; but, after a short reprieve, so to speak, the mutual disagreement between them is exposed more clearly than before.

Catholic Theology, since the time of St. Thomas d'Aquino or thereabouts, has been a sort of dead language, a well-embalmed corpse, like the Christian Religion, its mistress. Protestant Theology has advanced considerably beyond the point from which it started, but the swifter these progressive steps became, the more rapidly those crises followed when religious emotion trembled with fright at its own Theology. And to-day we have reached a point, standing on which we look down with disgust—as all educated readers do—upon the most celebrated writings of the orthodox; for it is easy to detect the professional glamour with which the apologists impose upon the uneducated and the half-cultured. Though they put on a mask of Scientific Culture, the asses' ears are too long to be concealed by the lion's skin. Moreover, the speculative and the critical writings of Liberal theologians have only the sorry effect of arousing our wonder at the industry and talent wasted on the task of divesting the current dogmas of all meaning, and of trying to foist on them a new meaning which is utterly out of harmony with their letter (still retained by the Christians). All permanent and scientific importance of Protestant Theology remains, truly, confined to the sphere of negation and criticism; of all the theological publications of the last thirty or forty years, only those have any scientific value, which avowedly demolish with criticism the historical and metaphysical assumptions of

dogma. Whereas all attempts at restitution or conciliation—however much talent is spent on them—prove, by their ephemeral importance, that the Protestant work of destroying the Christian dogmatic system advances without check towards its completion.

Religion in any form hates and fears Science. Christianity in particular is the bitter enemy of all Civilization, which strives to make use of all the resources of this world, to *domesticate*, so to speak, the spirit of Man *here upon Earth*. Christianity has an absolutely transcendental conception of the Universe. Those imbued with this conception are so absorbed by the interests of the next world that they are utterly indifferent to the present life. This assertion can only sound paradoxical to a reader whose ideas of the universally-known Scriptures have been so perverted from early childhood by systematic misrepresentations that he cannot read them with an unprejudiced mind. Protestantism is palpably a compromise between the claims of the invisible world and the recovered rights of this life; in other words, it is a hybrid belonging both to the Christian Middle Ages and to the Pagan Renaissance. Already, indeed, Protestantism is so completely secularized and dechristianized that we can hardly believe our eyes when the real form of the Christian idea (from New Testament times down to St. Thomas d'Aquino) is presented to us without the aid of Protestant spectacles. We are now so deeply engrossed in secular pursuits that we cannot form the least idea what the expressions '*to be religious, to be a Christian*' mean.

For example, we wonder how any one can set attachment to the Church—the representative of Religion—above attachment to his earthly fatherland, and it does not occur to us that such wonder is totally irreligious in the Christian sense. How can a Christian dare to make any comparison between, or to measure together, the patriotic and political interests belonging to the little span of his earthly existence, and the interests of

his soul which have reference to everlasting hell? The current opinion that we ought to put patriotism above religiousness, the laws of the State above the laws of the Church, plainly shows that the Christian estimate of the two worlds has been so completely reversed in our consciousness, that success in this life holds more place in our thoughts than ambition to get a happy eternity. Such mental attitude presupposes, necessarily, the loss of faith in Christianity's promises and threats about the fate of the immortal soul after 'shuffling off this mortal coil,' and also the rejection of the means of grace dispensed by the Church. If we have not yet gone so far as to break entirely with the Church and Religion, nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the place which we assign to Religion is the situation of a Cinderella compelled to wait upon her more privileged worldly sisters.

There is no necessity for further details to prove that Christianity must be hostile to Science. If, as we have seen, Theology involves Christianity in danger, Science, which declares itself *independent* of Theology and Religion, must bring still greater peril. Science, in so far as it agrees with Religion, is only a superfluous confirmation of that which needed no support; in so far as Science contradicts Religion, it is an enemy to the latter; and, in so far as it has no contact with Religion, it merely satisfies a frivolous curiosity about earthly things, which would be interesting enough from a *worldly* standpoint, but is utterly useless from the *Christian* point of view. We all know that the fire which consumed the Library of Alexandria was lighted by *Christian* fanatics conforming their conduct on that occasion to the words put by tradition in the mouth of the Caliph Omar.

The interests of Culture, when set apart from apologetic literature and its needs, are secular interests co-existing with those of the Christian Religion but hostile to it; for they uselessly divert the soul from the one thing needful, and, by splitting into fractions the small sum of human attention,

they diminish the Christian amount. We can, therefore, confidently assert that the representatives of Religion, in proportion as they defend the interests of Culture, are so far *secularized*, though, perhaps, unconsciously; and that, moreover, with few exceptions, they only *pretend* to represent those interests, or else declare that Christianity, by its very nature, pursues the aims of secular Civilization, their motive being, in most cases, the hope that the Christian Religion, when decked out with plumes borrowed from Modern Culture, will be more acceptable to the children of our secularized age.

Indeed, Christianity owes the entrance of Science into Religion entirely to the necessity of apologetics. When that Gnosticism, which was shaking all the foundations of the simple Christian Faith, had been fortunately suppressed, though not without leaving traces behind, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, in order to strengthen the position of the new Religion in the Roman Empire where Hellenistic Science had found a home, sought to blend this Science with Christianity. In this attempt they gave nearly as much authority to the Greek philosophers as to the records of the Faith. Yet, even an Origen could express his envy of the simple believers (he calls them 'more simple,' ἀπλούστεροι) by confessing that these Christians were happiest who felt no need of apologetic treatises, as their minds were untroubled by any difficulties of belief. Now this amalgamation with Science laid the foundation of perpetual religious controversies, and Christianity scarcely had secured a position in the world, when it began to reject and execrate as heretics of the worst type those Fathers of the Church whose services it was then too late to repudiate. One thing is certain, namely, that Christianity, in spite of its early dream of obtaining a Theology purely apologetic in character, has never, except when acting on the defensive, made any compact with Science; it furnished itself with a Theology only 'when it wished to maintain its exist-

ence in a world which it properly disowns.'<sup>1</sup> However, we must remember that Christianity found in the Roman Empire [of the Fourth Century] no youthful Civilization full of life and of growth like ours to-day, but a dead and fallen Civilization, one that had run its course. Such a Civilization was the only one which Christianity could have destroyed, the only one which it could safely incorporate with itself. And, forsooth, Christianity was enabled to assimilate the remnants even of a declining Civilization, only after first smothering the few pulsations of life which they contained; having destroyed all possibility of movement among these survivals, it preserved up to our time some of them like an anatomical preparation soaked in spirit, but it displayed not the slightest aptitude for developing them in any direction.

Moreover, if after the fall of the Roman Empire, Christianity strove to preserve the ancient Civilization from becoming an entire wreck, this effort was dictated by no religious, Christian interests, but by *the secular interests of the Roman Catholic Church, and especially of the Catholic hierarchy*. Certain it is that this hierarchy retained the use of the dead Latin language in order to keep up the unity of church government, and only cultivated Classical Literature because a literary education was not then obtainable without training in that branch of study, this literary education being necessary for the purpose of giving to the hierarchy and clergy an elevated and imposing position amidst the barbarous nations of the Middle Ages. These tactics were especially successful with the German tribes, who brought into the midst of the Romans a superstitious fear of, and a humble veneration for the 'Science of the Runes.' If, therefore, mediæval Christianity cultivated

<sup>1</sup> Overbeck, Ordinary Professor of Theology at Basle, *On the Christianity of our modern Theology*. [*Ueber die Christlichkeit unserer Theologie*, Leipzig, Fritsch, 1873.] This interesting book, which, for a theologian, is wonderfully plainspeaking and unprejudiced in tone, should be compared with the whole of the present chapter, particularly Nos. 1 and 2, and pages 46-50.

the study of the Greek and Latin Authors, it was not from any appreciation of or sympathy with that culture which is to be derived from them, but solely in the pursuit of external and hierarchical interests. The old Pagan writings were looked upon as a necessary evil to which the Church submitted in order to give to the clergy a literary and theological training, but which, undoubted productions of the devil as they are, no man should take in his hands without first making the sign of the cross and trembling for his soul's safety.

This way of looking at things was thoroughly in harmony with the Christian—that is to say, the transcendental—conception of the Universe. The Reformation allied itself with the Renaissance because it was, like the latter, an apostasy—though incomplete—from the Christian disdain of this world, from all ascetic seclusion to Pagan joyousness and delight in earthly existence. History, indeed, has justified this dread of the Pagan Classics, for the Renaissance of classical Paganism hastened on considerably the dechristianization of Europe.

These remarks will suffice to utterly refute the argument that, just as Ancient Civilization was incorporated in Christianity, so the latter may be united to Modern Civilization. In bygone years Christianity was terribly alarmed at the resurrection of Ancient Civilization from the hermetically sealed tomb of the cloisters; but how much greater panic ought now to pervade Christendom, being in the presence of Modern Civilization, which originated in the Renaissance of the Ancient, transformed the parent Culture, restored it to youth, re-created it and also re-inforced it with several important elements of Knowledge which Antiquity did not possess? The ancients had no Science of History nor any Natural Science in our meaning of the words, and the modern conception of the Universe, which is based on these Sciences, would by itself—even apart from all consideration of the progress which Philosophy has made—force us to discard the



cosmical theories taught by Christianity. Moreover, a Religion is not a mechanical appendage fastened on to some cosmical theory or other, and transferable from one of these theories to another quite antagonistic to the former. Religion, in all its forms, has organically grown up out of the particular theory of the Universe which served as its foundation. And if this support be taken away from any Religion, there remains no longer a living organism, but a dead limb cut off from an organism now destroyed, something like the trunk of a tree which has been sawn off down to the ground.

So telling does this argument seem to me that I think that it will, by itself, suffice to decide, in favour of the second term of the alternative, the question whether a transformation of the traditional Religion is necessary or a new construction altogether. We must especially remember that the Reformers continued to abide by the biblical cosmology; they, therefore, could and would have answered this question in the opposite way to us. Melancthon, with his very indignant protest against the Copernican system, deserves our respect, but we smile when, at this time of day, orthodox Lutherans, knowing that the contradictions between Science and the Bible cannot be glossed over by any sophistry, actually set themselves, in the controversy about the sun's motion, on the side of the Bible. What is proved by the difference between our impressions? Why, that Modern Culture makes it impossible for its adherents to be 'believing Christians' in the fullest, unimpaired meaning of the words.

The attitude of Christianity towards Art is the same as its attitude towards Science. The iconoclasts and the destroyers of organs have always been imbued with the pure Christian Idea; and the admission of Art into religious services has never been anything else but a secular bait to entice the great mass of persons in whom the religious sentiment has not been strong enough by itself to support and prolong much devotion or contemplation without the aid of such external

means of excitement. That compromise which put an end to the great ecclesiastical controversies of the Eastern Roman Empire was most lame and feeble, namely, the decision which banished statues from the churches, but permitted pictures to be hung up as aids to God's service. The decision had great influence on the history of painting, but we owe no thanks to the Christian Idea for this, as it is only a sign of a concession made by Christianity to the secular, æsthetic tastes of the worshippers. But, however that may be, and even if the Arts have *indirectly* derived some profit from the influence exercised on men's feelings by Christianity, it is quite certain that our age possesses no *living* Christian Art, and that in the plastic Arts, as well as in Music, nothing is produced in the Christian styles which are dead and gone, except some academic studies. To use a metaphor, all the vigorous shoots put forth by our Modern Art are completely *secular*, that is, *unchristian*; here is another proof that our age is alienated from Christianity. Would it be possible for our Art to have such characteristics if Modern Civilization were really Christian, as the theologians would have us believe?

If these points of opposition between Christianity and Modern Civilization may be summed up in the difference between the Christian and the scientific conception of the Universe, the former teaching the doctrine of Transcendentalism, while the latter maintains the theory of Immanence, we now come to the incompatibility of the thoroughly Theistic character of Christian Metaphysics with the modern spirit. This incompatibility has both a theoretical and a practical aspect. As regards mere theory, we are confronted by the Anthropomorphism which is inseparable from all Theism, and against which the modern spirit resolutely rebels. As long as Theism retains the doctrine which distinguishes it from Pantheism, namely, the Personality of God, it will be unable to disengage itself from Anthropopathism, and will remain

quite irreconcilable with Modern Culture. For the latter will only accept a God immanent in the Universe, a God of the eternal laws of Reason, and protests necessarily against the idea of a God opposed to the created Universe which he governs from without. As long as the Christian Religion retains Theism as its metaphysical basis, it will always have to fear a reaction; there will be the danger that the aversion, provoked by a transcendental, anthropomorphic God, may cause men to reject the good with the bad, to declare that the belief in God is as absurd as that conception of God which is asserted by Christians to be the only possible idea of a deity, and to thus become a prey to Atheism under the form of Materialistic Naturalism. The only God which entirely suits the transcendental conception of the Universe taught by Christianity is a God external to the Universe which he rules by miracles, but the modern spirit will only admit into its scientific world a God who is *immanent* in the Universe which he rules with unchangeable laws. This conflict will not cease until there is a general determination among men to break with the chief elements of the Christian Idea, for all well-meant endeavours on the part of philosophizing theologians and theologically inspired professors of philosophy, which strive to reconcile the antithesis, are feeble sophistries of people who try to sit between two chairs and who practise dissimulation in matters where a clear decision is the most pressing need of our generation.

This difference, purely theoretical in appearance, acquires more importance by the fact that it has practical consequences of a far-reaching character. Now, as long as I believe in a personal God who created me and all the world, and towards whom I have the same relation as a vase to a potter who made it, so long I am nothing to God; I am only a vessel in His hands, and I can only be moral by blindly obeying the almighty, holy will of this transcendental God. Thus all my Morality rests on a basis external to myself, the commands of

a God who is outside me. In other words, my morality is *heteronomous*. But real morality begins with moral autonomy, and heteronomous Morality, however useful for the education of minds, becomes the immoral enemy of the only true Morality, when it is deliberately substituted for the latter. Theism, however, cannot admit any moral principle above or beside the will of God; therefore all Theistic Morality exercises a demoralizing influence upon a man if he possesses sufficient mental culture to practise moral autonomy. The modern moral conscience clearly perceives that actions which merely carry out the commandments of a foreign Will cannot claim any *moral* value in the proper sense of the term; that, on the contrary, nothing can be reasonably designated 'moral,' except a will self-determining and legislating for itself. Therefore, the moral conscience of our age is diametrically opposed on the subject of Ethics to the Christian conscience, inasmuch as it is impossible to separate the latter from Theism and the notions which rest on the Theistic hypothesis.

Accordingly, from whatever point of view one examines the leading ideas of Christianity and those of Modern Civilization, they are found to be invariably opposed to each other; it is not surprising, therefore, that this irreconcilable opposition appears more or less in questions of secondary importance. Indeed it is only by accident that there is ever any harmony between the deductions drawn from the two sets of ideas, just as a problem, though wrongly worked out, may be brought to the right solution by means of mistakes accidentally compensating one another. Also it is quite possible that certain sides—which we have not discussed—of the Christian and the Modern cosmical theories, sides indispensable to each theory, yet having no special relation to either, as, for example, Historical Realism and Pessimism,—it is possible, we repeat here, that on these points harmony may reign between the two conceptions. We are scarcely conscious of the existence of Historical Realism, because the theory which denies it is too

feebly represented among us ; and Pessimism has only just begun to penetrate into the world of ideas pervaded by the light of Modern Culture. These minor points of agreement, therefore, cannot alter our general assertion that there is an irreconcilable antagonism between the fundamental principles of Christianity and those of Modern Civilization, which conflict necessarily must end in the complete overthrow of Christianity by our anti-Christian Civilization, or in a triumphant reaction on the part of the Old Faith ; yes, end it must, either in the suppression of liberty among all nations who will be compelled to yield to the furious attacks of Ultramontaniam, or in the actual, if not nominal, fall of Christianity.

Only a firm belief in the logical consistency which prevails in the development of ideas in History, could have enabled any one before the battles of Königgrätz and of Sedan, to feel confident that Modern Civilization would gain the upper hand. It is only since Prussia established the German Empire, broke with the crypto-Catholicism of King Frederic William IV. (and of the minister Mühler, who carried out the same policy), and recognized that its chief mission in History was the resumption in modern times of the millennial struggle against Rome ; in short, it is but recently that there has been a fixed point capable of forming the centre of crystallization for all the aspirations which gather round Modern Civilization in the struggle for their existence menaced by Christianity. That the present struggle between Church and State bears on both sides the mark of a war of extermination, is known to every intelligent man who can distinguish the unconscious aims of History from the objects pursued by an individual at any given moment. The Church wishes to make the State its gendarme, while the State desires to reduce the Church to the level of an association under State control. But the final and the most profound meaning of this struggle lies in the settlement of the question whether this world or the next is to be the chief object of interest to us moderns, whether the con-

cerns of Earth or of Heaven, of this life or of eternity, of Modern Civilization or of Christianity, are deserving of our greater attention. A test of the amount of real Christian spirit remaining in the Protestant creed will be furnished by the extent to which the various Protestant sects go in siding against the State, and in recognizing how identical the interests of Christianity are with those of Catholicism. An advantage gained by Catholicism would be immediately followed by a victory on the part of the evangelical or 'orthodox' tendencies in Protestantism. But the triumph of the State over Ultramontaniam would sweep away such puny opponents as easily as one blows the dust off an old book. Many persons write and talk about the present 'Struggle for Civilization,' but only few of them comprehend that this struggle is the *last despairing effort of the Christian Idea* before its retirement from the stage of History, against which Modern Civilization has to defend its great conquests by exerting its utmost powers for life or death.

#### IV.

### THE CHRISTIANITY OF ST. PAUL AND OF ST. JOHN.

THE canonical books of the New Testament are, as is well known, emanations from standpoints of belief and of doctrine very antagonistic to one another; they thus furnish an intelligent reader with the spectacle of most violent religious dissensions. It is not less notorious that the majority of the most important Christian dogmas belong to later phases in the Evolution of Christianity, and cannot, without violence to the text, be read into the New Testament, where we find reflected the development of Christian dogma only during the first hundred and fifty years of the Christian era. Accordingly we meet with palpable contradictions between one part of the New Testament and another, and also between the general tone of the New Testament and the later forms taken by ecclesiastical dogma. But these contradictions are ignored, overlooked, and—when any opponent expressly points them out—are simply denied by the religious sentiment which is self-confident, self-supported, and regards the whole world of religious ideas only as a means by which it may gain its own aims and ends. So, as soon as the sense of scientific truth has become an independent power, independent enough to recognise contradictions as they exist, and to feel offended at them, we have a sure sign that the religious sentiment is cooling and is ceasing to possess exclusive domination over the soul; for, while the religious sentiment is strong enough to maintain that supremacy, the sense of truth is totally incap-

able of proving to the intellect that the contradictions really exist. Such was the situation of mediæval Christianity which regarded the assertions found in the canonical books and in the writings of the orthodox Fathers as unalterable and supreme. The fiction according to which Christianity has undergone no development in its doctrine, is still accepted by Catholicism, which teaches that all the decrees of Councils have been only definitions of Christian doctrines existing in the Church from time immemorial, that is, from the foundation of the Church.

In battling with the abuses of the contemporary Church, the Reformers upset this idea, but it was a reactionary movement on their part, after annulling a portion of the history of Christian development, to go back to the New Testament, that is, to the doctrinal standpoint of the first century after Christ's death. But the Reformers unconsciously falsified and disfigured that doctrine by comprising under it as many of the results of later doctrinal development as were *accidentally* to their taste. Protestantism remained true to its principle only when it continued the work which it had begun, when it discovered and duly proclaimed the anachronisms with which the dogma of the New Testament was unhistorically enriched, when it expunged from the history of Christianity's development periods successively longer and longer. So Protestantism became always more reactionary in proportion as it imagined itself to be growing more Liberal. Certainly, the history of dogma had imposed upon the intellect a series of beliefs progressing in difficulty of acceptance, but these were only the logical conclusions drawn from the propositions—so contrary to Reason—contained in the fundamental principles of the Christian system. The work thus begun, therefore, was nothing else but the *gradual unravelling* of the cleverly-woven fabric of Christian dogma; when the task was finished, nothing remained but an old useless yarn. The radical contradictions in the principles had led to sophisms ever fresh and more



subtle than before, against which no objection could be urged if the premisses were granted. Attacks made on the deductions because they are contrary to Reason must necessarily lead to the rejection of the first principles for the same cause. We cannot be under any delusion about this point, unless we are giving only a nominal adherence to the first principles while we really strip them of their actual meaning, but nevertheless fancy ourselves to be still Christians.

Luther took his stand upon the doctrinal system of St. Paul, believing in good faith that he was adopting the general substance of Christian dogma. But St. Paul's doctrine has absolutely nothing in common with the teaching of Jesus; it is concerned only with the Messiahship and the Atonement of Christ, by means of which the insufficient righteousness of the Jewish Law before God is to be made complete.<sup>1</sup> Now this idea has become to us quite unacceptable. We no longer know of a God who judges and punishes men by retaliating on them after the cessation of the terrestrial conditions of their crime; we can no longer comprehend a divine justice which demands from Man more than his nature enables him to give; we shudder at the belief in a God who punishes all generations for the fault of an individual; we are astounded when we see a judge who kills on the cross an innocent substitute instead of the culprit, and then boasts about his acceptance of this substitution just as if he had granted a favour instead of accepting an exchange; we laugh at the contradiction contained in the idea that an actual *God died* for us; and, from an æsthetic point of view, we find fault with the apotheosis of Jesus for marring the pathetic tragedy of a prophet who seals his doctrine with his death.

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. O. Pfeiderer, *Der Paulinismus*, Leipzig, Fues, 1873. [English translation by E. Peters, Williams & Norgate, London, 1878.] Compare also F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die Christliche Religion*, 4ter Brief, *Der Paulinismus*. [*Letters on the Christian Religion*, Fourth Letter: 'Paulinism.']

It was impossible for our age to retain these foundations of the Paulino-Augustino-Lutheran dogma. Accordingly St. Paul [and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews] had to be abandoned; and search was made in the New Testament for some other doctrinal system which might serve as a centre to the much looked-for 'Modern Christianity.' Here first St. John offered himself, and Schelling's contention that after Petrine and Paulinian Christianity there must come a Christianity of St. John, might have deluded the lovers of philosophic-historical theories, if it had not, unfortunately, come too late. More than any one else, a Spener was on the road to this Johannean Christianity; only Lutheranism was then still too firmly established to be overthrown in favour of a new idea, and Spener himself was too unconscious of the doctrinal differences in the New Testament to declare positively for St. John, that is, against St. Paul. Schleiermacher, the modern successor of Spener, appeared at the eleventh hour with his attempt to reconstruct the real life and teaching of Jesus from the (so-called) Gospel of St. John, which he considered to be the most trustworthy and the earliest of the four Gospels; but not long after Schleiermacher's death, the Gospel bearing St. John's name was recognized as the latest of the more important of the New Testament books, and as a composition written to represent a certain tendency of thought, to extol a particular idea which is removed even further than Paulinism from the actual teaching of Jesus.

Schleiermacher was, accordingly, the last theologian who could try, by mixing up together different epochs of doctrinal development, to produce a construction worthy of notice. To us who come later this attempt is debarred; we can only concentrate our attention on each phase of doctrinal development in its distinctive characteristics. There is now no longer any question about St. John's doctrine being the most highly developed of the series of dogmatic systems found in the New Testament; nor is it now disputed that St. John's Gospel,

thanks to the Alexandrian Philosophy, melted down—to use a metaphor—in it, and because, also, of the central position which it gives to Love, displays depths and beauties which in the later development of Christianity were not utilized as they deserved. And yet St. John can no longer serve as a support for our religious ideas. Apart from the crude Manichæan Dualism which divides men into children of the Devil and children of God—each eternally predestined to their lot—and which is thus in glaring contrast with the *all-embracing* Humanitarianism of the Modern consciousness; apart, too, from St. John's frequent relapses into Jewish ideas about future punishment, and from the mystical crudity of the incoherent fragments of Metaphysic scattered throughout his Gospel—apart from all this, there is one insurmountable barrier which will always prevent us from adopting St. John's doctrinal standpoint, namely, the dogma of the divinity and mediation of Christ, which occupies the centre of his conception of the Universe.<sup>1</sup>

The belief that no man can come to God except through Christ, is an anathema fulminated against all who disbelieve in the necessity of this mediation; and the belief that the Word (Logos) was incarnate in Jesus in any special way more than in Lautsze or in Spinoza, is not acceptable to the cultured men of to-day. And therefore Liberal Protestantism quite justly considers St. John's doctrines to be untenable, and has silently abandoned the reactionary position occupied by Schleiermacher; and all the more readily, because St. John's metaphysical dogma of the Logos possesses such a manifestly Pantheistic look and character that it has always been really unwelcome to Theistic Liberal theologians. Only a speculative

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. Ch. Baur, *Vorlesungen über Neutestamentliche Theologie*, Leipzig, Fues, 1864, 3te Periode, 2: 'Der Johanneische Lehrbegriff.' [*Lectures on New Testament Theology*, 3rd Course, No. 2: 'The Doctrinal System of St. John.'] Compare also F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die christliche Religion*, 5ter Brief: 'Die Lehre des Johannes.' [*Lectures on Christianity*, No. 5: 'St. John's Doctrine.']

theologian, like, for example, the Hegelian Biedermann, who has shown in his *Christian Dogma* how incompatible the personality of God is with the Deity's absolute existence, and has had the courage to avow himself a Pantheist—it is only, we repeat, such a theologian who can, with Hegel, find in St. John's Logos-doctrine and in the essential unity of the Absolute with the Finite Spirit, which that doctrine seeks to realize, the only tenable idea of the Christian or of any Religion. But in vain will he try to persuade us that these ideas, imported from the latest German Philosophy into Christianity, have any historical connection with Jesus, or with St. Paul, or with the historical Christianity which is founded principally on their doctrines. Not unjustly will a teacher of such fancies be perpetually condemned to play the part of a black swan in the Christian Theology.

What remained, then, as the last anchor of safety for *Modern Christianity*? Only the 'original, pure, and authentic doctrine of Jesus.' It was the last step in the reaction; Liberalism resolved to take it. The whole history of the development of Christianity was to be blotted out, and the Christian Religion was to be compressed into that primitive shape which it had at that moment in its Evolution when its traditional founder lifted it out of the cradle. Only what Jesus *himself* taught shall have any authority; only as he believed in himself will we believe in him; on these conditions, and on these alone, shall we become *real and true Christians*, the followers of the 'Christianity of Christ.' This receipt is simple; let us see what result we shall get with it.

## V.

### THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST.

THE doctrine of Jesus, as opposed to later interpretations of it, was for the first time depicted by Strauss in his celebrated *Life of Jesus*. Although that book appeared before the Tübingen School of critics had given to the world their conclusions proving that the Fourth Gospel is not a historical source for the life of Jesus, and is still more untrustworthy as an account of Jesus's teaching, yet Strauss made, in his *Life of Jesus*, such a complete separation between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, that it was easy for a reader of Strauss to execute the necessary elimination of the latter Gospel. Read in this manner, the masterpiece of Strauss, in spite of the progress of historical researches, is still the most instructive guide to the study of Jesus's teaching, inasmuch as Strauss's criticism is the soundest, and because he spares us that sentimental phraseology with which, following the precedent of Rénan, the majority of the more recent biographers have fancied themselves obliged to envelop the subject to such an extent that a reader feels cloyed before arriving at the pith of the matter.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The relatively best exposition of the real teaching of Jesus which I have found in a theological work is perhaps that given by Professor Weiss in his *Exposition of the Biblical Theology of the New Testament* [*Lehrbuch der biblischen Theologie des Neuen Testaments*], Part I. 'The Doctrine of Jesus according to the Oldest Tradition.' Weiss keeps himself fairly free from phrases, and does not imitate the custom—so fashionable to-day—of making Jesus into a cosmopolitan Liberal.

Unquestionably, the teaching of Jesus relieves us from a load of highly dogmatic ideas which St. Paul, St. John, and later Christian writers place before us. It never occurred to Jesus to consider himself a God, or equal to God, or even only like God; he would have repelled any such suggestions more indignantly than he repudiated the far more harmless epithet of 'good' in the sense of 'free from sin.' Jesus knew of no pre-existence before his birth, claimed for himself no future glory except that of a judge and of a king chosen by God to judge and rule over his elect people. He never uses the expression 'son of God' except to designate a special object of the Divine Father's universal love. It is thus clear from this that Jesus never made any attack upon the unity of the Deity by proclaiming the later doctrine of the Trinity; that dogma cannot be attributed with truth to him; but how much more monstrous, from a historical point of view, appears the attempt to invest Jesus with the Hegelian doctrine of the identity of the Absolute with the Finite Spirit! Again, Jesus regards the death which awaits him only as a powerful means of arousing indifferent men from their torpor, and of inciting them to amend their ways; it is only thus that his death becomes to him a means of salvation for the souls of many, who, without this sanguinary proof of the earnestness and sacred truth of his doctrine, would not have troubled to have listened to it. So we can easily get rid of the divinity and the superhuman sinlessness of Christ, the Trinity and the Atonement, if we reduce the substance of the Christian Religion to the data furnished by the Synoptics about the teaching of Jesus. The question, however, remains whether we will also bargain or not for the other consequences of going back to the standpoint of Jesus, which must be looked for in the epoch directly preceding Judæo-Christianity, and not (as is generally supposed) in the period immediately following, for the doctrinal standpoint of Jesus represents an intermediate phase of Religion between the contemporary Judaism and Judæo-Christianity.

Jesus was emphatically a Jew;<sup>1</sup> his education had been the national Jewish training, and, apart from the influence of the Jewish Essenes, no foreign culture ever reached him. He lived and died in the circle of ideas of his time and of his nation, partaking in the superstition of the former, as well as having all the national faith of the latter in prophecies. The whole of his activity displayed itself as a reproduction of a national Jewish prophet's career, ascetic practices not excluded. Since the time of the prophets, a belief was current that the national-Jewish God would one day gather together all nations around his temple, and the Jews had already for a long time accepted proselytes from foreign nations. The increasing international relations in recent centuries had doubtless strengthened the tendency of the national religious consciousness to expand into a universal Religion, and the later relapse into the exclusiveness of a national Judaism was only a reaction against the anti-Jewish Cosmopolitanism of the Christianity preached to the Gentiles. Jesus, therefore, remained altogether in the old religious paths marked out by his nation, when he, while laying stress all the time on the immutability of the Mosaic Law, aimed at the propagation of the worship of Yahweh among the Gentiles. The belief in the immediate end of the world forbade any adjournment of the missionary work if any fraction of the Gentiles was to be saved. As regards the psychological side of the phenomenon we are studying, it was very natural that the hopes set on the conversion of the Gentiles took all the firmer possession of Jesus's mind as his disappointment at his failure to spread his ideas among the Jews became more bitter.

Jesus, I repeat, was a Jew, and nothing but a Jew. Whoever doubts this, does so from the disturbing influence of his will, or else because he is ignorant that the Judaism of Jesus's time differed widely from the Judaism of Moses and of the

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die christliche Religion* (*Letters on the Christian Religion*), pp. 72 and following.

prophets. For between these two religious phases there is not only an interval equal to that which separates the Middle Ages from our days, but an epoch containing such extraordinary incidents as captivities, conquests, inter-marriages, and intermixture of foreign civilizations, that the idea of dull stagnation in Jewish thought is quite inadmissible. The Talmud, with its sprinkling of liberal and humane ideas, was at that time nearly completed in the form of oral tradition; the educated Jew of that age looked at the Old Testament through the spectacles of the Talmud,<sup>1</sup> just as the Liberal Protestant of to-day sees the New Testament through the spectacles of Modern Rationalism and Humanitarianism. There is nothing in the teaching of Jesus which he had not learned from the culture of his time so deeply impregnated with the Talmud; even his parables are—some of them—taken from the Talmud, and there is not the shadow of a doubt that his lesser similes are borrowed from that treasury of national proverbs. The positive merit of his teaching did not consist in the promulgation of any absolutely novel doctrine, nor in lending an essentially new character to some pre-existing elements of dogma by altering their relative place of importance; it consists rather in the fact that he brought out the esoteric tradition of the Schools to the public ear, so that the poor and the wretched had also their share in instruction and in edification; and that he, with piercing insight, knew how to extract from the mushroom-like hypertrophy of Talmudic learning some true pearls which he, by employing figurative language, rendered naive and fit for distribution among the masses.

It is true that Jesus, apart from these loans furnished by

<sup>1</sup> Compare Emanuel Deutsch, *Der Talmud (The Talmud)*, Berlin, Dummler, and *Stimmen vom Euphrat und Jordan (Voices from the Euphrates and the Jordan)*. [Compare also *A Talmudic Miscellany*, translated by P. J. Hershon. Trübner & Co., London.]—*Note for English readers.*



the popular religious belief and the contemporary theology, has given us some apparently original ideas, thoughts which he made the centre of his teaching, and which he uniformly and emphatically reiterated in a manner very impressive. But it is precisely this element in his Gospel—the only original part, and indeed the message, which he considered to be the chief object of his mission—which has become for us no more than the dry leaf of a past season, than the dross which has spontaneously fallen off in the process of historical development. But when the subsequent Evolution is brought in as the original teaching of Jesus, and is declared to be the only part which is entitled to have any religious influence with us, we are also obliged to review his teaching as portrayed in the historical documents, and to consider these things the most important which had the greatest importance for him.

Now, what is the Gospel of Jesus? It is the prophetic declaration that the national Jewish kingdom of Yahweh (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ), which the Jews expected in the form of an earthly theocracy ruling over a new earth, which would have to be created after the destruction of the old one by fire,—that this kingdom, we repeat, is near at hand, and that its advent—in other words, the end of the existing world and the final Judgment—is so closely impending that the present generation, at all events, will be involved in the catastrophe.<sup>1</sup> His Gospel was principally confined to this (which is only a continuation of John the Baptist's teaching), and all counsels, all suggestions about the conduct of life to be adopted in any particular crisis, which, though given by him, are opposed to the general views of his contemporaries, are merely conclusions drawn from this Gospel, that is, from the belief that it is not worth while to set up any domestic establishment on this earth for the short span of time still remaining to it, and that

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die christliche Religion* (*Letters on the Christian Religion*), pp. 51-72.

it is advisable to devote oneself entirely to repentance and amendment, in order not to be devoured by fire at the Judgment Day, and excluded from any participation in the kingdom of the new earth. Jesus himself repeatedly speaks in a way which shows plainly that this alone, in his opinion, is the specific meaning of his Gospel, and that the rest of his preaching merely repeats exhortations and promises well known to his audience, without proclaiming any new doctrine. This belief in the nearness of the end of the world, which finds, moreover, a point of national religious support in the Jewish prophecies, obviously arose from the deep-seated conviction that a world, so bad as this, deserves to perish, from the idea that God shares this conviction, and from the logical conclusion that he will therefore destroy the world without delay. Jesus, indeed, as is well known, has not been alone in uttering this prediction ; at all times and in all places, a similar train of thought in minds open to religious emotion has produced similar prophecies which have, not unfrequently, met with quite as much acceptance from credulous followers as those of Jesus did from his disciples. If Jesus now and then hints at an ideal anticipation of this approaching kingdom of God, still this *ideal* anticipation is none the less inseparable with him from the belief in the reality of the Jewish prophecy, and in the truth of his joyful message announcing that the actual accomplishment is about to take place.

If, therefore, the modern adherents of the historically attested doctrine of Jesus lay so much stress on being real and authentic Evangelical Christians, they must first give to the joyful message of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God which has come upon earth, a signification which is opposed to the meaning expressly given to it by Jesus, and of which he could not possibly have had any idea. However, if we make a caricature of the alleged historical view, and discover Jesus to have been not a Palestinian Jew living in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, but a member, by anticipation, of

the Protestant Association of our most 'highly enlightened' age, then there is certainly nothing more strange in the whole of History than the great persistency with which this Jesus made himself into a Jew for love of the Jews—his compatriots. Else, such a caricature of History will be simply a remnant of the old divorce between the religious sentiment and Reason, of that faculty for blending irreconcilable ideas together in such a way that the confused medley of thoughts may satisfy the religious sentiment. The only difference is that it is no longer worth while to mystify one's reason about the result which follows in this case, and secondly, that such procedure but poorly accords with the pretension of pursuing a strictly scientific, critical, and historical method.

But the principal question now presents itself. The adherents of Christ's Christianity wish to believe in him only as he believed in himself; in what sense, then, did he believe in himself? It is admitted that he did not believe himself to have pre-existed as God, or to be a Mediator like the ideal Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, or to be a Redeemer in St. Paul's sense of the word, or to be a sinless moral pattern. All the more certain is it that he did not regard himself as the preacher of a new religious doctrine, or the founder of a new Religion. He would have been exceedingly surprised if any one had predicted to him that on his religious activity the birth of a new religion would be fastened, which would persecute Judaism—its mother—with bitter and envenomed hate.

In reality, Jesus, at the beginning of his career, only believed himself to be a prophet chosen by God, and it was not until some time had elapsed that he, thanks to his miraculous cures, and under the influence of the praises of deranged and excited persons who hailed him as the Messiah, began to so mystify his ideas about himself as to believe that he was the expected Messiah, although, up to the time of his miraculous cures, none of the signs (pointed out by the

prophets) suited his person.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, he was obliged to tacitly sanction the baseless assumption of his Davidic descent, and to interpret his prophetic career as an earthly activity (totally unknown to the prophets), which was destined to prepare the way for the Messiah, in the full glory of whom he would not descend before his coming at the Last Day from the clouds of heaven with fire around him. Jesus so little dreamed of an *ideal* interpretation of the Messianic beliefs, that, up to his last moments, he never renounced his conviction of the approaching end of the world. According to him, his kingdom was 'not of this world,' but by these words Jesus only meant that the actual commencement of his kingly power would date from the foundation of a literal 'new earth' and of a literal 'new Jerusalem.'

It was not until they saw that the promises of Jesus remained unfulfilled, that the Christians resorted to ideal interpretations. But can the adherents of the actual doctrine of Jesus, who make their peace with historical criticism—can they, we ask, have resort to such a shift as this? If, however, they do so, though conscious of doing violence to History by these allegorical interpretations, what is that appeal worth which they make to the authority of Jesus's Gospel? And why, pray, as a general rule, should people make use of such an evasion, which is equally useless and objectionable from a historical and from a philosophical point of view? And why do people not state at the outset what they are aiming at with these shifts? St. Paul combined the Messiah-idea with his own idea of a Redeemer; this was a bold, arbitrary proceeding, false as regards History, and impotent in the face of criticism, but still it was possible. If, however, we take away from Jesus his character of divine Mediator and divine Redeemer, it is impossible for us *so* to interpret the belief which he had in himself as the Jewish Messiah, that there

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die christliche Religion* (*Letters on the Christian Religion*), pp. 38 and following.

remains any admissible sense in which we could believe in Christ. To us the Jewish Messiah-belief is nothing more than a historical, old curiosity; therefore, it is absurd to suppose that we could believe in Christ as he believed in himself.

After thus setting aside these two elements in Christ's Christianity, by which he believed himself to be fulfilling the Jewish Religion, because through him the national Jewish prophecies were being at last realized, we must, in order to find out what other distinctive characteristics there were in Jesus's teaching, first take into our considerations the theory of the Universe which he derived from his firmly-seated belief in the speedy destruction of all things. Jesus manifested a supreme contempt for the State, for the administration of justice, for the Family, for Labour and for Property, in short, for all worldly advantages and all means which ensure a lasting continuance to social order.<sup>1</sup> This mental attitude results quite naturally from the belief in the approaching end of the world; so we are rather surprised when Jesus, with great inconsistency, stoops occasionally (just like Schopenhauer) to adopt the standpoint of those who are unable to rise to his ascetic view of things, and condescends to give them moral precepts fitted for the lower point of view of secular worldliness.

Since, however, this mental attitude, derived from the 'original Gospel,' is diametrically opposed to all the aspirations of the modern civilized world, it is hushed up as much as possible by the adherents of 'the authentic teaching' of Jesus, and is attributed to the Ebionitish colouring of the Synoptic accounts (particularly of St. Luke). Thus Jesus is accused of incoherency in thought, in order that his teaching may be better harmonized with Modern Culture.

After discussing these principal points, we come to a feature

<sup>1</sup> Compare F. A. Müller, *Briefe über die christliche Religion* (*Letters on the Christian Religion*), pp. 110-131.

in Jesus's teaching which clearly marks it off from the contemporary Talmudism. This is the pessimistic conviction that the world is quite unworthy of existence ; but this Pessimism runs contrary,—not perhaps to Modern Culture,—yet certainly to the comfortable Optimism of Protestant Rationalists, who find themselves so thoroughly contented with their Deity and with his creation—this world of ours. Accordingly, this Pessimism is ignored, just as the Pessimism of the other New Testament writers is again and again disregarded.

Thus we have fortunately extracted from the teaching of Jesus all that was peculiarly characteristic in it. The remainder consists of parables and sentences which, as Jesus simply accepted the metaphysics of Jewish Theology, do not contain, strictly speaking, any metaphysics at all, and add nothing new about Morality. But he elucidates and develops the Morality which is based on rewards and punishments,<sup>1</sup> an ethical system which Liberal Protestants can no longer uphold,—let it be embellished or disguised in ever so cunning a way. The transition to a higher method of Ethics is to be found in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus reproduces the famous answer of Hillel to a disciple, that the whole Law is contained in the precept, 'Do unto others that which you wish they should do unto you.' In another passage (Matt. xxii. 40) Jesus declares the substance of the Law and of the Prophets to be the two commandments (given in Deut. vi. 4, 5 and Lev. xix. 1), not claiming at all that he is saying something new, as the immediate assent of the doctor of the Law (Mark x. 31, 33), and still more St. Luke's version of the incident, prove. The latter evangelist (Luke x. 25, 28) makes Jesus quote to the doctor of the Law himself these commandments of love towards God and love towards one's

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount have also this character, and, moreover, they express throughout the ardent desire to flee from this world, and the belief in the speedy advent of the earthly kingdom.

neighbour, as being the principal laws. Later on in the same Gospel (Luke xviii. 20), Jesus quotes the five most important of the Mosaic Laws, and finally he formulates the precept (following, doubtless, Lev. xix. 2 and xi. 44), 'Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect' (Matt. v. 48); that is, the command to take the personal God as their model of conduct. This last conception is, of course, surrendered by all who are transcendental Theists, inasmuch as with an immanent Deity there can be no question of moral relations between him and his manifestations.

Thus the entire fraction of Jesus's ethical teaching, which Liberal Protestants can consistently retain, is reduced to the Mosaic commands of love towards God and love towards one's neighbour, which are quoted by him *only once*. And, although Jesus lays emphasis on their importance, he draws no conclusions from them; their significance is, in truth, further weakened by the fact that the other passage attributes the same importance, namely, of being the summary of the Law and of the Prophets, to the homely morality of Hillel, which is a most rational rule of life, based on reciprocity. We can draw from this no conclusion except that Jesus did not clearly distinguish between the two maxims; in other words, that the commandment to love God and one's neighbour did not seem to him a higher or a more exalted maxim than the practical rule of reciprocity of services, a rule suggested by prudence, and which is found as a native proverb in so many languages. St. John is the first who makes love, in its profoundest meaning, the central point of Ethics, and, therefore, it is contrary to historical truth to attribute this ethical teaching to Jesus, whose system of Morality is essentially based on the egoistic motive of choosing the lesser evil and the greater advantage. We may add that this teaching of his was in harmony with the spirit of his Jewish contemporaries. If, when referring to the moral order of things, or rather to the springs of moral motives, Jesus's teaching has any *original*

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feature, it is only the so-called Gospel announcing that the end of the world and the kingdom of God are close at hand ; a declaration which, by representing the terrific punishment and the seductive reward to be immediately coming, gives them greater motive power to moral action.

As regards Morality, therefore, the teaching of Jesus has no original element which we could use ; all that is practical in it consists of occasional quotations, the depth and meaning of which Jesus certainly did not grasp. Accordingly the adherents of Jesus Christ's teaching find themselves in a corner out of which they cannot escape, except by importing their own meaning into his declarations, and making the latter into mottoes or headings whose historical meaning one need not scrutinize too closely. The result is that when the adherents of Christ's Christianity preach sermons on biblical texts, their arbitrariness of interpretation, their talent for finding types, their construction of theories outdo the performances of the earlier centuries ; and their equals in this field are to be found only in the discourses of liberal-minded Rabbis, who, however, have a model and an excuse in the bold flights and leaps of oriental imagination which make us laugh when we come across them in the Talmud. There, indeed, the sentences are, for the most part, expressed, not in abstract language, but by metaphor ; and accordingly this uncritical and unhistorical process of importing modern thoughts into old texts is much facilitated, as a figurative expression admits of any number of meanings when it is separated from its historical and psychological connections.

The fundamental error of the adherents of Christ's Christianity is twofold. It consists, firstly, in the belief that the historical importance of Jesus is to be looked for in his teaching, instead of in his personal influence on those around him, and, secondly, in the idea that Jesus ought to be considered and honoured as the founder of the Universal Religion, viz., Christianity.

About the first of these points St. Paul and St. John



had a clearer historical conception than our modern critical historians possess. St. Paul did not trouble himself about what Jesus had said, nor about 'the sayings of the Lord' current among the band of disciples; he considered such slavery to the letter to be quite unnecessary and likely to cause confusion of ideas. He held only to the doctrines of the approaching end of the world, the Messianic character of Jesus, and, above all, his death on the Cross for Mankind's redemption. Thus Paul built up his new Universal Religion. St. John, or rather the writer of the Fourth Gospel, had so little regard for the historical teaching of Jesus, that he, in the freest manner, altered the tradition of that teaching in order to make it fit in with his own doctrinal tendencies; on the contrary, he considered that the Incarnation formed the crisis of the Universal Judgment, that, when the 'Light' came into the world, the crisis had arrived; and he regarded the crucifixion of Jesus as the turning-point in the world's history. It is certain, therefore, that we can no longer believe, as these two writers did, in a particular efficacy of the person and of the actions of Jesus; but we can acknowledge his influence *as a man upon men*.

How difficult is it to define what it is that constitutes the captivating charm of a personality for those who come into contact with it! The poet's pen hardly evokes afresh in the imagination of the reader that mysterious something; how, then, can prose perform the task? We can with ease enumerate all the amiable qualities of a man, but still there will be left unnamed a something which cannot be expressed in words, which exercises on those around him an electrifying and enchanting influence, and which, nevertheless, may be accompanied by great failings quite repellent when considered by themselves. Such must have been the indefinable personal influence exercised by Jesus, as is proved by the enthusiasm of the crowds who left house and home, wives and children, in order to follow him in his wanderings.

Most enthusiastic was the personal devotion which this wonderful, prophetic Man inspired ; His followers had already begun to call Him 'Lord' in anticipation of His future kingdom on the earth. It was this devotion, primitively called 'faith,' on the part of those who had surrounded Jesus, which, by its persistence after the Master's burial and by its joyful acceptance of martyrdom, imposed sufficiently upon one of their most decided persecutors, to cause the charm of such a wonder-working personality to draw him also into its meshes, and—favoured by other psychological conditions—to change him from a Saul into a Paul.

As we have already remarked, nothing was further removed from Jesus's thoughts than the idea of being the herald of a new doctrine or the founder of a new Religion. Like the earlier prophets, he only wished to teach pure Judaism, proclaiming that the national promises of the Jewish Religion were about to be fulfilled, and presenting himself as the expected Messiah, as the Man called to accomplish that fulfilment. If, in later times, his life was made the point of departure from Judaism to a new and non-Jewish Religion, if his teaching was interpreted and disfigured in the meaning of that new Religion, this was no less contrary to his wish than to his intention. He would have considered such consequences of his work *impossible*, as he believed the end of the world and the new kingdom of the Jewish God to be *immediately approaching*. So the work and death of Jesus were only the unconscious and involuntary causes of the foundation of the new Religion by Paul. Had no Paul got hold of the death of Jesus on the Cross, and, by the help of that fact, developed his own new dogmatic and religious ideas, had the doctrine of Jesus continued to be that Jewish Christianity which it was before the counter-influence of Paul modified it so largely, then the community of Christ's disciples, who only differed from other Jews by believing that the Messiah would speedily appear (and that, too, in the form of

the returning Jesus), after practical demonstration of the error of that belief, would have died out of itself as far as being a religious body separate from the other Jews. For the difference was so small that we cannot describe Jesus Christ's disciples as a Jewish sect, the notion of sect implying some difference in dogma or in ritual.

From all this it is very plain that those who wish to revert to the original teaching of Jesus, but reject the doctrines of the nearness of the end of the world and the Messiahship, are simply reverting to the religious standpoint of the Jews in the time of Jesus, inasmuch as they object to those features in his doctrines which distinguished the latter from the contemporary Jewish beliefs. Such persons, unless they prefer attaching themselves to John the Baptist instead of adhering to Jesus, ought not to be baptized; they should rather undergo circumcision, for Jesus did not baptize any of his disciples, but he presupposed that they had been or would be circumcised, since not an article of the Mosaic Law is to remain unfulfilled (Matt. v. 18, 19). As, however, the adherents of the doctrine of Jesus probably do *not* feel inclined to submit to that operation, but consider themselves superior to Jewish customs, although they do not essentially differ from modern Liberal Jews, their eclectic standpoint vanishes into thin air and is reduced to nothing. Under the superscription, 'The Christianity of Christ,' there remains only a blank sheet from which all that was previously written upon it has been erased. And this is doubtless what the good people wish for; they want an open space, without limits or barriers, in order to launch their own ideas into the world without abandoning the name of Christianity; in other words, they make modern ideas sail under the Christian flag instead of under the flag of Civilization.

It would be strange if, when confronted with the falseness of this title, the sense of truth and Reason were not offended quite as deeply as when coming into contact with any other

dogma. And we should also be surprised if the historical sense of men did not protest against historical truth being derided by persons who profess to be guided by the critical Science of History. After these good people have made a clean sweep of the essential dogmas of Christianity, they then, for the purpose of retaining, at least, one miserable scrap—we mean the name ‘Christianity’—pause before a dogma which is equally unpalatable to Reason. This dogma is the affirmation that the fragments of misinterpreted biblical sentences and of ideas borrowed from Modern Civilization, which they have fastened together, really form the original and authentic Christianity of Christ.

The real teaching of Jesus and his belief about himself have been briefly sketched in the foregoing pages. It is perfectly clear that the attempt to revive in our time a Christianity like Christ’s is a thousand times more chimerical than the enterprise of restoring St. Paul’s or St. John’s teaching to the place of honour.

But in all this noise which is made about ‘The Christianity of Christ’ there lurks a hidden remnant of the old belief in authority, which we must not refrain from bringing to light. People reckon on the respect for Christ’s authority, which has prevailed from the earliest Christian times among the masses until now. The foundation of this wonderful respect is the belief in his divinity; and, thanks to the power of persistence possessed by spiritual forces, the respect is still surviving for longer or shorter time, though the root which was its support is dead. It is this lingering respect which, after all other authority has been overthrown, ensures for the teaching of Jesus a more complete and unquestioning acceptance than it would obtain if men considered and examined his declarations simply as being what they were meant to be and really are, namely, the occasional discourses of a visionary Jew who lived more than a thousand years ago, who was a man like ourselves, but whose culture was that of a ruder and more super-

stitious age than ours. But the inconsistency to which we allude goes further : people seek to artificially nourish this respect, though robbed of its foundation, by entertaining towards the figure of Jesus, when levelled to the position of a man, the veneration which was paid to the God-Man of the old faith, and which would, by its absurdity, raise a laugh, if the degrading Byzantinism of such an action did not provoke in us the deepest moral indignation. Strauss's demand of reverence for the material Cosmos is simply absurd, but when Liberal Protestants ask for such homage to be paid to the *man* Jesus, the proposal seems both offensive and revolting.

However, the good people will hardly expect that the regard felt by the masses for Jesus, which is kept up in so unprotestant a manner, can long survive after that the aureole of his divinity has vanished. This consideration should bring them to perceive how insufficient their transitory expedient is. The Protestant theory, when carried to its logical conclusion, clears mercilessly away every kind of dogmatic authority ; so these good people, whether they will or not, must take their part in the mission of Protestantism ; they must extricate themselves without applying to Christ's authority any more than to that of his apostles.

We resume ; the attempt to revert to the teaching of Jesus no longer gives us the hope of any positive advantage to be gained from it and employed in building up a modern Religion. There is only the negative advantage that we find in the teaching of Jesus fewer dogmas than in that of his disciples, and that his doctrine, by its deficiencies, is in greater harmony with the teaching of Liberal Protestantism than any later phase of the Evolution of Christianity.

## VI.

### THE UNCHRISTIAN CHARACTER OF LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM.

WE have seen, in the last chapter, how the Protestant theory, in the irresistible course of its ever-advancing criticism, undermines and overthrows all authority, not only of Popes, Councils, tradition, fathers of the Church, the New Testament and its writers, but also even the authority of the person to whom all these appealed as being the direct bearer of Divine Revelation. When the Protestant method has been consistently carried out, there remains no reason why we should give, except relatively, a greater authority to Jesus the carpenter's son than to the fisherman Peter or to the tent-maker Paul. We learn to measure them all with the same rule, and to consider their teaching valid only on those points which harmonize with the doctrinal standpoint of the modern reader. Since, however, the position taken on all the principal questions by these various representatives of the Christian faith is untenable now, only some of its subordinate and accessory doctrines can be retained by the representatives of *Modern Christianity*. 'This method of picking and choosing is called 'Eclecticism.' But by Eclecticism one gets outside that period of development in the different phases of which one selects what is pleasing ; for the choice is determined by motives and considerations which lie outside the Evolution of the idea governing the period—(in this case in accordance with considerations drawn from Modern Civilization).

A man who has renounced the pretension of being a

Christian can, nevertheless, quote for the occasion passages from the Bible just as well as from the poets, but he makes the quotations not to get additional evidence for his point; he thinks of them only as a rhetorical set-off, or because he is charmed with the striking expression which a thought has discovered in some passage or other. Liberal Protestants are in danger of interlarding their sermons with Scripture texts for this purpose only; yet they always seek to profit by the respect for the Bible, which among the masses has survived the destruction of the faith in revelation. But this is just as dishonourable a farce as the pretence of having respect for Jesus of which we have spoken in the last chapter. Both these juggleries will be carried on some time longer, but *one day* Liberal Protestants will see their hearers signify to them that they knew the trick. Whether a Liberal Protestant preacher should borrow his text from the Bible and divide his sermon according to the divisions of his text or not,—that is, after the utter uprooting of authority, not to mention the possible abuse which he may make of the privileges still left to him,—that is, we repeat, a totally indifferent question. His doing so would be but a harmless amusement if, by retaining the empty form, the speaker did not appear to retain, at the same time, the essential character of the Christian sermon, which is nothing less than the interpretation of God's revealed word. By means of such juggleries, Liberal Protestantism tries to pass for a preserver of historical continuity with positive Christianity, whereas, by surrendering all belief in revelation and in the authority of the Bible, they have struck this continuity a blow from which it cannot recover. There is, indeed, no longer any intrinsic reason proceeding from the subject itself, why such a preacher should seek to support his discourse by any text, for his *reason* is the supreme criterion of the worth of what is put before him. Does he wish to prop himself up on foreign doctrinal opinions? That is his own affair, and the best methods of exposition are alone to be con-

sidered. Is he to seek for the required support in modern or classical writers, ecclesiastical or profane, in Chinese, Buddhist, Jewish, or Christian authors? The answer to this question can only be supplied by the solution of another question, namely, where will he find the most appropriate and concise expression of the ideas which he represents? There is no question of authority, since none of them have any of it.

If, then, these preachers still take their texts invariably from the New Testament, they are incited to do so only by an external motive, namely, the desire to proclaim that their thought is connected with the New Testament more closely than with any other book. But this is a false representation, inasmuch as they regard with great aversion all the principal doctrines of the New Testament. Their biblical eclecticism, in its positive aspect, is confined to certain minor points which they, in the bargain, misrepresent entirely through unhistorical interpretation. As regards first principles, their eclecticism is purely negative, since they accept, in any New Testament writer, only those passages where he, explicitly or by implication, denies the dogmatic principles belonging to other stand-points in the same phase of religious development. Thus it is that Liberal Protestants support themselves on St. Paul when they reject the Mosaic Law, and they rely on St. John to justify them in their complete separation from Judaism, and, by the way, in their indifference to the Eucharist; they appeal to Jesus Christ's simple teaching when they deny the metaphysical dogmas which form the basis of Christianity, and which could have been formulated only after his death, inasmuch as before he died there did not exist any Christian Religion separated from Judaism. It is unnecessary to remark that such negative eclecticism cannot claim to arouse any positive interest; the whole of its utility consists in promoting destructive, aggressive criticism. It can only interest us as long as the positive dogma—which has become objectionable—sur-



vives still in its historical force, a continuation of the conflict being, in that case, rendered necessary.

We now ask, once for all, what right a Liberal Protestant has to call himself 'a Christian,' unless it is the fact that his parents had him baptized and confirmed. In all times, those who professed to be Christians have had a common characteristic, namely, faith in Christ. In Christ's God the Jews and the Muhammedans believe, and the latter also believe that Jesus Christ was a wise, virtuous prophet, for whom God had a special regard. If it were, then, sufficient to believe that Jesus was a popular religious orator, gifted with good sense and judgment, of course the believers in Muhammed, the Muhammedans, would have as true, nay, a better claim than we to the name of 'Christians.' Therefore, if it is the belief in Christ which makes men 'Christians,' it must be understood in a stronger and narrower sense. But we have seen that Liberal Protestants cannot believe in Christ either as Luther, or as St. Thomas d'Aquino, or as St. John, or as St. Paul, or as St. Peter believed in him; and much less, unfortunately for them, are they able to possess the identical belief about him which he had about himself, for he fancied that he was the Jewish Messiah, the Anointed One. In what way, then, do they believe in Him? They believe in Him as *the founder of the Christian Religion*.

Now we saw in the preceding chapter that Jesus cannot be regarded as the conscious and willing founder of a new Religion. It is proved, therefore, that the only form of belief which Liberal Protestants have in Jesus Christ does not accord with historical fact.

But, waiving this objection, we are unable to admit that the belief which recognizes in a person the formal quality of being the founder of a Religion furnishes sufficient proof that the believer belongs to that Religion. In the first place, *all non-Christians*, who have heard of Jesus Christ according to the traditional Christian account, believe that he was the founder

of Christianity ; and secondly, we should be arguing in an empty circle if we alleged that the essential *Christian Faith* consisted in believing Jesus Christ as the founder of the belief that he is the founder of that *Faith* itself. The necessary consequence of this reduction to a minimum of the old belief in Christ is that Liberal Protestants proclaim *that* belief to be quite unnecessary for membership of the Christian Religion, and they seek for the characteristic mark of such membership away from the belief in Christ, that is, in a different quarter from that where the history of Christianity has sought for it, without exception, for the last two thousand years. We here witness the disruption of continuity with historical Christianity.

Moreover, when a man, true to his Protestant principles, has unconditionally rejected the authority of tradition, he cannot possibly find any sign of adhesion to the Christian Religion, except the belief in the person of Christ or the belief in the contents of his teaching. But we saw in the last chapter that the first of these and (we proved just now) that the second of them are untenable by Liberal Protestants. We have therefore placed it beyond a doubt that the standpoint of Liberal Protestants is already *outside the Christian Religion*. The Protestant theory, at its present standpoint, has already passed the boundary where historical continuity with the Essence of Christianity ceases.<sup>1</sup>

I need hardly say that I have no idea of hurling the reproach of untruthfulness at those Liberal Protestants who demand to be recognized as 'Christians' because they affirm that they are

<sup>1</sup> De Lagarde, in his work, *On the Relation of the German State to Theology*, arrives at the frankly-expressed conclusion that 'there can be for us no longer any question of Christianity.' This logical and lucid statement is the more remarkable, as De Lagarde still keeps to the delusion of seeing in Christianity only a corruption and not a development of the Gospel, and of considering the latter in its pure, that is, its historically authentic, form, to be, even at the present day, a sufficient basis for a religious reconstruction.

such. All I maintain is, that these persons either have not clearly comprehended the final consequences of the Protestant principle, or else are under a delusion about the veritable results of historical-critical inquiry into the sources whence a Religion arises. Science is now-a-days making such rapid progress, that the time cannot be very distant when the delusions in which they yet rock themselves will to them also appear untenable. We can plainly see how ill at ease they are in their present position. This feeling of insecurity and uneasiness explains why Strauss's negative reply to the question which he proposed, 'Are we still Christians?' was the object of so vehement attacks from Liberal Protestants. It is true that the argument of Strauss in this part is rather superficial, inasmuch as he does not consider the standpoint of Liberal Protestants, but contents himself with showing us how great our rupture is with the orthodox Religion. But the conclusions of his argument on that question are the only unassailable points in his book (*The Old Faith and the New*), and their value consists in the straightforward reply which he gives.

From that same feeling of insecurity about their religious attitude can also be explained the illiberal intolerance which 'Liberal' Protestants display towards Liberal views in general. The less they have of Christianity, and the greater the artificiality which they employ to keep up the illusion of their pretended Christian character, the greater naturally must be the zeal with which they guard the narrow limit which, even in their opinion, separates them from extra-Christian principles. Christians, who still command all the rich treasure of a positive belief, can be tolerant up to a certain point; but when, in order to keep up the outward show of Christian faith, one is obliged to imitate, so to speak, the trick of walking among eggs, and to fight about syllables, all toleration has become simply impossible, and the Christian Left is bound over to intolerance. It is a well-known fact that all religious parties

are Liberal and advocates for toleration, only as long as they are in opposition, and find themselves oppressed by other parties who are in power. But as soon as the oppressed party gets the upper hand, nothing more is seen of their Liberalism, and, as a general rule, each party outdoes its predecessors in intolerance. Throughout History this phenomenon is found, and it would be repeated to the fullest extent if our modern Liberal Protestants ever get into power. Already, for the reason just indicated, they ought to show themselves more intolerant than all religionists who have previously ruled. But at present Liberal Protestantism will, though with bad grace, put up with anti-Christian Philosophy, as long as it can borrow, from the latter's arsenal, weapons for sharpening its destructive work of criticism; but that Philosophy would have no bitterer enemy in the present or the past than this same Liberal Protestantism would be if it succeeded in deposing orthodoxy.

No one can fail to see that in Germany the chances are rather in favour of this party, and certainly they may raise their hopes high. If indeed the adherents of Liberal Protestantism did not believe in the possibility of their gaining power, it would be unintelligible why they so vehemently insist upon remaining in the National Evangelical Church of Prussia, where Liberal Protestantism is as much at home as a sparrow in a swallow's nest. The Liberal Protestants of the 'free communities,' a generation back, went far more honestly to work, who, though they clung to the delusion that they were still Christians, did not see the propriety of remaining in a National Church founded on positive Christian principles. Whether they would have consulted their temporal interests better if they had looked forward to future supremacy within the National Church is a question hard to decide. But perhaps the fate of the 'free communities' movement has served as a warning to modern Liberal Protestantism, which perceives that it is of no use to reckon on the support of the

masses, and that, in order to gain position, it is necessary to have influence in high quarters. Such a reflection, indeed, would be the severest condemnation of their cause, which really is the reverse of popular, and has only the appearance of popularity. And this reflection would also be equivalent to an admission that the masses cannot be roused to any enthusiasm about the faith which Liberal Protestantism has to offer them, and that it is only artificially, by means of the machinery of the traditional hierarchy, that this party can make a tool of the masses. And yet, in every age, all religious movements have proved their vitality by their power to stir and carry along the masses. But since the masses among whom Liberal Protestantism strives to propagate its creed are no longer 'Christians' in the strict sense, and as therefore it cannot be the rupture with Christianity, concealed as it is otherwise in every possible way, which keeps them off; and since, on the other hand, the masses, except in large towns, have not yet become irreligious, but on the contrary earnestly desire to satisfy their religious needs in a manner suitable to the times, it must be the fault of the gospel, or rather of the no-gospel of Liberal Protestantism, if the masses cannot be roused to any interest in it, except when, by its negative side, it satisfies their desire of opposing the ecclesiastical authorities, when, in other words, it satisfies not their religious needs but their desire of freedom.<sup>1</sup> The man who, unless urged by his hatred of orthodoxy or by the prospect of the enjoyment to be obtained by listening to an unusually eloquent preacher, never goes to hear a Liberal Protestant's sermon, generally prefers to take a walk on Sunday mornings or to devote his Sunday mornings to work or reading. Why this is the case, we showed clearly enough in our preceding considerations, but it may be useful to give an entire chapter to this point.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Overbeck's *Die Christlichkeit unserer heutigen Theologie* (*The Christianity of Contemporary Theology*), chaps. iii. and iv.

## VII.

### THE IRRELIGIOUSNESS OF LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM.

THE man who carries within himself metaphysical conceptions of such a nature that his emotions are positively affected by them possesses Religion. Whether he is slightly or deeply moved, whether he receives such impressions occasionally and by accident, or expressly seeks them and abandons himself entirely to their influence,—all that depends upon his natural religious disposition and the culture which he has received. But it is very rare to find a man quite destitute of the elements of a religious disposition, though with some persons, the feelings aroused by certain metaphysical conceptions may remain in the purely instinctive and unconscious stage, while, in others, these same ideas evoke powerful emotion. Now there is a Science of Metaphysics. But it is not given to all men to attain to Science, least of all to the scientific study of Metaphysics. And yet every man, as Schopenhauer has so beautifully shown, has need of Metaphysics; every man has need of metaphysical ideas in order to satisfy his need of Religion. And therefore arises the necessity of a set of metaphysical conceptions which can be communicated and transferred to the minds of others in a way different from that of Science; it must be, too, a system of Metaphysics which will serve to satisfy, even in those persons who are strangers to Science, *directly*, the need of Metaphysics, and, *indirectly*, the religious need.

This Metaphysic, which we might call *popular* Metaphysic, is Religion. However, Religion consists of something more than the metaphysical ideas of the masses; it contains the

capability of discerning the means and directions for arousing, in a strong and lasting form, the religious sentiment with this Metaphysic for its foundation,—that is to say, religious cultus; and, secondly, Religion contains the deductions drawn from this Metaphysic for the practical conduct of men, in other words, religious Ethics. Cultus belongs to Religion alone; but Morality constitutes a domain which Religion shares not only with Science properly so called,—as is the case as regards Metaphysic,—but also with custom, the origin and development of which are often unconscious. In custom, Morality appears as something fixed, empirical, unconscious, and palpably resting on no principle. It is only in Science, as far as Science attaches Morality to metaphysical principles, and in Religion, which fulfils the same office, that moral precepts find a justification, and this justification opposes a barrier, at least theoretically, to the assaults of the arbitrary individual.

Thus we see that Religion constitutes the whole of the Philosophy of the masses, since the other elements in Philosophy affect the masses little or not at all. In fine, Religion comprises all the Idealism of the masses, Art not being accessible to them, except under a form too coarse to elevate them to artistic Idealism. Every ideal (or, speaking more exactly, all ideals of an ideal nature, to the exclusion of the materialistic ideal of a Social-Democratic Utopia), and every tendency of the heart towards the Ideal, become incarnate among the masses as Religion. It is Religion alone which constantly reminds the masses that there is something higher than eating and drinking and sexual intimacy, that this transient world of the senses is not the All in All, but only the manifestation of an eternal, super-sensuous principle of which we see here only the confused shadow. To keep alive this sentiment in the hearts of the simple masses—be it only as a dark foreboding—is the task common to all Religions when they have raised themselves above the primitive stage of rude, natural Religion.

The world of metaphysical ideas must always be, to the religious man, the living source whence the excitement of the emotions in worship and the influence on the will in moral action arise. When this source is dried up, worship is petrified into dead, meaningless ceremonies, and religious Morality becomes converted into abstract precepts or sentimental phrases by which no living soul on earth could be influenced. On the other hand, Metaphysics lose their religious character as soon as they cease to be a direct stimulus to the emotions and to the will, and become mere theory or pseudo-Science; pure Science, indeed, among philosophers, but pseudo-Science among theologians who confine their attention to interpreting and systematizing the traditional dogmas. The masses are by no means clear in their ideas about the various elements which go to make up Religion, but they instinctively feel that it is the *unity* of all these notions, which is the object of their search in Religion. The masses do not know Metaphysics by name, but they do know what they require of Religion, namely, that it should give them *the truth*; not *all the truths* as they lie scattered in the various special Sciences, but *the truth* which the Universal Science, Philosophy, strives to attain, the one and eternal truth able to satisfy their unconscious need of Metaphysics.<sup>1</sup> Not that it can be ever imparted to the masses in all its full extent and depth, even supposing that Science had really found and formulated it. No, the supersensuous cannot so easily be made intelligible to the human understanding. The essence of Truth is a Mystery, and will ever remain so; its expression will be always only symbolical, never exhaustive or scientific, whether the symbols consist of abstract notions or of images and figures.

Without the profundity full of promises, and the infinite riches of a mystery displaying a different aspect to each individual, there is no Religion possible; in other words, a

<sup>1</sup> Compare Heinrich Lang's *Religious Discourses* (*Religiöse Reden*), pp. 149-151, and 254 and following.



Metaphysic devoid of mystery would not have any influence on the religious sentiment. Mystery, indeed, plays the same part in Religion which it does in a work of Art. For a work of Art, also, begins to really deserve the name only when its external form is merely the symbol of a mystery opening an infinite world to the person who meditates on it and to the presentiments of the heart; a world in which each man finds the meaning which suits him without being able to accuse others of error. Nevertheless, real Mystery has place only where the super-sensuous meets the sensuous, where the eternal meets the temporal, as is the case with Metaphysics, Religion, and Art. But there can be now no question of mystery when one is dealing only with the temporal and natural relations of phenomena to each other without reference to the metaphysical origin of physical existence; for instance, in the results of the special Sciences, in the reciprocal action which is exercised and suffered by natural beings in the Struggle for Existence, and in practical life. To introduce a mystery where it is out of place (for example, as David Strauss wishes to do in the subject of the monarchy) is to mystify oneself and others also; to reject mystery in things of which it forms the essence, (as Strauss wishes to do in Religion), is to elevate the knowledge, acquired by superficial observation, to the dignity of sovereign-ruler of the world reduced to its physical basis, instead of the Ideal destroyed in its mysterious essence. The masses, as a whole, have no objection to a mystery which is presented to them as truth, even though it be contrary to Reason; but Modern Culture, which relies upon Reason's supremacy, will not to-day accept as truth a mystery which contradicts Reason. We admit mystery only in the form of a hypothesis obtained by the inductive method and appearing to be necessary, a hypothesis which, by going beyond the domain of sense-objects, leaves necessarily a remainder unintelligible to our understanding which rests upon the senses; only this remainder must

not be self-contradictory, for that would be contrary to Reason.

Christianity offered to the masses 'the Truth,' that is, the Metaphysics of the Middle Ages, an ingenious combination of Jewish and Greek Philosophy, a system of thought most wonderfully complete in itself, holding in readiness logically-connected answers to all questions, a system which can be despised only by those who have not yet overcome their hostility towards it so as to look at it solely from a historical point of view. The truth of Christian Metaphysics was not, during the days of its supremacy, challenged seriously, because it had no competitors then, inasmuch as Theology was the only Science. With the decline of the Middle Ages arose again a free Science which relied solely on Reason and experience, and which utterly ignored Revelation; the contradictions between this secular truth and the Christian 'Truth' were glided over by means of the queer doctrine of two orders of truth. With the Reformation began attempts to reconcile these two orders of truths, attempts, each of which rapidly succeeded and perished more quickly than its predecessor. Protestantism, being a makeshift, asks us to believe that it is able to bring about a permanent reconciliation of Revelation and Reason, of Faith and Science, or whatever other names they go by. It is only when Protestantism has finished its course, has broken with Revelation, and has ceased to possess a Theology in the strict sense of the word, then only is it that these castles of the Fata Morgana vanish, and the previously-supposed divine truth of Christianity retires from the scene in favour of the secular truth of Science.

The Liberal Protestantism of the present day has almost reached this boundary, and it is open inconsistency on its part to be afraid of taking the last step. Liberal Protestants no longer believe in any Revelation except that which is produced whenever an original and creative genius appears; truth, therefore, for them can be nothing else but the actual result

of the history of the Evolution of their principles in all persons co-operating in the movement. Now in this series, Jesus and his disciples can only occupy a very modest place, inasmuch as their chief standpoint has been generally rejected. In other words, Liberal Protestantism ought no longer to look for the truth anywhere else but in the history of Philosophy, and it should take the history of Theology into consideration only when the latter contains some philosophical truth, that is, truth resting on its own foundations and not on a pretended Revelation. But the real state of things is very different from this. Men go on making new theological theories, while preserving the external form of the old Theology which could not survive even the idea of Revelation. They retain in it a terminology (while doing violence to the meaning of the words) which owes its origin to a totally different conception of the Universe, and they impart an entirely wrong signification to it by the help of the most arbitrary interpretations and double meanings. Such performances are, in truth, much more worthless and repulsive than the restless and fruitless labours of the orthodox theologians applying themselves to a task like that of the Danaïdes. Under such circumstances we need not be very surprised to find that strict orthodoxy, when trying to combat such misinterpretations which take all meaning out of the traditional theological notions, imagines that its opponents are inferior to itself in point of good faith and sincerity. If the imposing Gothic structure of mediæval Theology is no longer to our taste, nothing hinders us from building in another style, but let no one try to persuade us that the true signification—now deciphered for the first time—of the old cathedrals turns out to be only *castles of cards*. Liberal Protestantism, therefore, has only a *pseudo-Theology* which it dare not renounce, for fear of seeming to break the chain of historical continuity. And this pseudo-Theology, in its turn, prevents Liberal Protestants from accepting Scientific Truth as the new and only foundation to rest upon. Speaking

metaphorically, we may say that now Liberal Protestantism sits on a chair, the legs of which it has sawn off, and lays hold of the neighbouring unbroken chair with its hands for support. Can the masses expect to find in such a system as this 'the Truth' which they look for in Religion?

We saw before that the fundamental element of a Religion is its Metaphysic. But if we were to ask Liberal Protestantism 'What then is your Metaphysic?' we should greatly embarrass it; and its representatives are very wisely determined to keep silence on the subject, and, with evident fear, avoid all opportunity of expressing their views about it. They have two reasons for this conduct; firstly, they know that each of them has a different Metaphysic,—a fact which the masses are not to know,—secondly, they all have more or less an undefined feeling of being inconvenienced by their Metaphysics. In fact, it is absolutely impossible for them to free themselves from Theism, as long as they desire to preserve historical continuity with Christianity, and while they accept the anthropomorphic conception of the Heavenly Father who personally loves his children and troubles himself about their prayers. They are compelled, also, to accept the consequences of Theism, namely, the heteronomous Morality which we have alluded to before, and the necessity of a theodicy, that is, of a justification of the all-wise, personal deity in the face of the grave defects marring the creation which he, consciously and with full foreknowledge, made; thus, too, an Optimism which softens down the evils, and which makes golden promises for the future; and, lastly, Liberal Protestants are bound to accept the free-will of the creature, serving as a scapegoat for the evil. What does this imply? Nothing less than that Liberal Protestants ignore the works of the great philosophers since Kant, or, at least, only borrow from them minor propositions which suit their purpose, and do not practically get beyond the dull Theism of the 'enlightenment' epoch of the last century. The only difference is that Liberal Protestants combine that

dry Rationalism with the sentimentality of the latest theologian to whom it has been still historically permitted to believe in the possibility of a reconciliation between faith and knowledge; they also gloss over the nonsensical absurdities which they get in this mixture, by using a deafening mass of phrases, the ingredients of which are skilfully taken from all the corners of 'Modern Civilization.' But at the present time the pre-Kantian Deism, with its watchwords 'God, Freedom, and Immortality,' will stand as little chance of being accepted in Philosophy as the systematized vagueness of Schleiermacher. In so far as Liberal Protestantism is in earnest with its Theism, it remains outside the line of philosophical development of the last hundred years, and it displays zeal for 'the Truth' and signs of spiritual progress only in a negative sense, that is, only when there is occasion to destroy positive dogma and to tear down the barriers of ancient authority.<sup>1</sup>

But there is worse to come. Liberal Protestantism perceives the state of things, and no longer really believes in its own Metaphysic, which it retains only *faute de mieux*, and for the sake of preserving its connection with Christianity. Liberal Protestants teach us, indeed, the doctrines of the immortality and infinite progress of the individual, but they presuppose that we shall not trouble ourselves any further about this doubtful future state. They teach us to believe in moral freedom and in the paternal providence of God, but they assume, as a matter of course, that we, in harmony with modern Natural Science, believe that the Universe is governed by unchangeable necessary laws. How tempted one feels to suspect that the Metaphysic of Theism is only a sham façade concealing the reality of a very different structure, I mean modern Naturalism with its superstitious belief in the substantiality of Matter. It is useless to struggle against or to

<sup>1</sup> Compare Lang's *Religious Words (Religiöse Reden)*, pp. 290 and following.

resist facts ; the old Theistic conception of the Universe has, in truth, become incompatible with the modern spirit which has no longer any choice except between Materialistic Naturalism, like that of Strauss, and Monism or idealistic Pantheism. If the former be chosen, there are various forms of Materialism which may be adopted, but the latter, as long as there is no Pantheistic Religion in the Western world, is to be found only in the writings of true Philosophers.

Deism and Materialism have a marvellous affinity, which, doubtless, is owing to their mutual shallowness and to their mutual aversion towards all that is profound and incomprehensible. Both are *rationalistic*, in the bad sense of the term, inasmuch as they reject, before any investigation, every irrational remainder, and find all problems as simple and dull as their own faculty of comprehension really is. For centuries both have agreed very well together in France and in England, for the Universe of Materialism is a purely material machine, which God, adds Deism, made and set going on a certain day. But this apparent harmony comes always to an end by Materialism resolving to dismiss the mechanician. It seems to Materialists to be quite unnecessary to retain him, since they have discovered that the wheels have rubbed against one another so long and so well that at last the machine went. Ought not, indeed, Liberal Protestants to perceive that they are on the point of losing their God ? And is not the explanation of their excessive rage against Strauss to be found in the fact that he so bluntly held up this unpleasant prospect before their eyes ?

However that may be, the loss appears inconsiderable. For Mystery, on which the religious sentiment essentially rests, is as little to be found in Deism as in Materialism. In the former, as in the latter, everything is so cleared up and explained that not a single dark point remains to which the religious sentiment could betake itself. It may be, indeed, that German Philosophy is wrong, and that the Deistic and

Materialistic platitudes are right; but then we must renounce all pretensions of making this 'Truth,' which is an utter stranger to Metaphysic, or has only a pseudo-Metaphysic, the support of the means to arouse and satisfy the religious sentiment. It is not only a daring but rather a naive demand of Strauss that we should feel a sentiment of religious piety and attachment towards his Universe which is only the aggregate of all individual material substances, and which threatens every moment, for no reason whatever, to crush us between the wheels and the teeth of its pitiless mechanism. The ex-theologian is here playing the modern thinker a sorry trick. But still more rash than this contention of Strauss is his attempt to demonstrate its truth by means of an isolated experiment, namely, by producing his own sentiment of repulsion at Schopenhauer's Pessimism. The cause of Strauss's sentiment of horror is his feeling of comfortable, worldly satisfaction with this life; in other words, his irreligious sentiment becomes shocked by the unworldly, that is, religious attitude of Arthur Schopenhauer.<sup>1</sup>

In the Christian Sacraments, moreover, Mystery was presented to the masses, and brought close to them in an almost, so to speak, palpable form. Has, then, Liberal Protestantism anything to offer as a really religious equivalent for these mysteries which have become unacceptable because they are contrary to Reason? Shall the much-needed compensation be personal supplication to, and communion with, a Deity who,

<sup>1</sup> Any one who does not yet clearly comprehend the depth of artificial shallowness and triviality to which the theories of Strauss would plunge us, may consult the often quoted work of Overbeck (*The Christianity of our Contemporary Theology*, pp. 71-78); but also, especially, Bruno Bauer's delicious banter and argument in his book entitled, *Philo, Strauss and Rénan and Primitive Christianity* (*Philo, Strauss und Rénan und das Urchristenthum*. Berlin: Hempel, 1874), pp. 36 and following. The first part of Nietzsche's *Inopportune Reflections* (*Unzeitgemässen Betrachtungen*) contains excellent remarks in parts, but often goes beyond the point, and is defective in style.

I believe, is no more able to supernaturally interfere with my thoughts or with the determinations of my will than with the phenomena of external Nature, so that prayer to him for moral strength or for consolation in trouble would be as absurd an act as to ask him for good weather in harvest-time or for the cessation of a raging epidemic? But as soon as prayer is seen to be only an illusion of which one is conscious, yet which it would be well to keep up on account of its good effects on the mind, it becomes reduced to the level of the strong oath which a porter utters in order to stir up fresh energy within himself when his load seems too heavy to lift up on his shoulders.

The Ethics of Liberal Protestantism fare no better than its Metaphysics. As we remarked before, Theism, if consistent with itself, can only produce a heteronomous Morality; but the modern consciousness is totally antagonistic to this style of Ethics, and Liberal Protestants have too much regard for the Culture of the age to stupidly offer us a heteronomous Morality based on the will of God. Since therefore the Theism of these good people is tolerably ashamed of itself, and conceals its metaphysical deficiencies under the cloak of Christian love, the simplest way of getting rid of this unwelcome heteronomy is to declare Morality independent and to detach it from Metaphysics which are dispensed with at all other times and crises. We may, perhaps, here be confronted with the precedents set by Herbart and by Kant, although Kant's 'Practical Reason' is not solely psychological, but has, when closely examined, a very metaphysical character because of its universality; and we shall probably meet with many critics indulging to their hearts' content in hyper-moral and sentimental declarations about 'a love without end,' and trying to elevate themselves up to the height of contemporary Culture by the adoration of the idea of Humanity. Against such a moral system, the reproach of heteronomy cannot be brought, and a preacher who adheres to this system of Ethics is abundantly provided with subjects for sermons.



But 'to preach Morality is easy, to find a basis for it is difficult.'<sup>1</sup> On what basis are preachers going to rest their moral discourses? It is clear that a preacher will be obliged to appeal to the moral inclinations and instincts of men; if these are strong enough, the appeal will succeed, but in that case it was superfluous; if they are weak, then the moral discourse will be scorned and ridiculed, and the preacher will be prevented from demonstrating, even in theory, to the scorners that they are wrong. For the latter, *they* also appeal to men's instincts and propensities as he does; and in order to decide which instincts are to be preferred, love or hate, forgiveness or revenge, renunciation or egoism, and which of these ought to guide our actions, the preacher again has no other means at his disposal besides an appeal to sentiments or to tastes,—things which differ in different individuals. Once detached from Metaphysics, Morality is at best nothing but the Natural Science of human interests and propensities considered in their effects on the community; as regards the claim to be the rule of action, such Morality may raise but cannot justify it, if the unfettered will of the individual asks to see its title-deeds. (The reader may compare Max Stirner's work, *The Individual and his Property* [*Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*, Leipzig, Wigand, 1845], especially the chapter, 'Humanitarian Liberalism'—'Der humane Liberalismus.' This book, richer in ideas than the complete works of many a celebrated Philosopher, is, in the Carnival-like extravagance of its thoroughly logical conclusions, the most strikingly unintentional proof of the impossibility of making Individualism the basis of Morality, and of the necessity of finding this basis in Monism. There has been a conspiracy of silence against this book even in the most Liberal circles, and people have covered their faces with virtuous indignation at it. But the secret terror, betrayed by this mode of action, only proves that they have not been able to find a weak point in this

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer.

unpleasant adversary, or that they have shrunk from putting on the only weapons with which this egoism can be struck to the heart, namely, Monism and Pessimism.) Morality, in the true sense of the word, that is, as a Science of reforming present conditions, is only possible when founded on a Monistic, Metaphysical basis. This Metaphysic reduces the individual Will, which in its apparent substantiality fancies itself absolute, to the condition of a simple objective phenomenon, and thus deprives it of its assumed stability and sovereignty. Theism, on the contrary, confirms the individual will in the illusion of its substantiality, and expressly provokes the Prometheus-like rebellion against the Creator who has created it without first asking its permission. The unscientific character of its Morality would not, after all, be so dreadful a misfortune to Liberal Protestantism in the presence of the fact that, even if it does not promote Morality, it is not directly opposed, like the equally unscientific, heteronomous pseudo-Morality of true Christian Theism, to scientific Ethics. But what concerns us here is the fact that the Morality of Liberal Protestantism is no longer a *religious* system of Ethics, like the heteronomous Morality of Christianity was from beginning to end. For an ethical system, in truth, cannot be religious in character, unless it be something more than a mere elucidation of the psychological play of instincts, unless it support itself on the metaphysical bases of Religion, and derives its force from them. We have not broken with the Law of Moses and with the commandments of the Infallible Church in order to let some Liberal preacher or other dictate to us the laws of Morality, which would still appear to our minds as heteronomous as before. The orthodox priest may pose as an oracle, but the Liberal preacher must renounce such claims,—both in Ethics and in Metaphysics he must be prepared to prove the *intrinsic value* of his prescriptions, while the orthodox refers his to the command of God. When the Liberal preacher sees himself obliged to abandon the authoritative

position which *theoretically* he refuses and abhors, but which *in practice* he would be very glad to share with his orthodox colleague at times, he is wont to take to Love as the principle of Morals. But if at last people should become inclined to believe that Morality is identical with Love and kindness of heart, the preachers will have to instantly leave off preaching. Morality; for it is impossible to create the feeling of Love in the hearts of those who are devoid of it by means of sermons. If by some psychological process we come to regard Religion as nothing more than Morality, and if, through sweetness of disposition, we consider Morality to be identical with Love, if, that is, we reduce the whole of Religion to Love, then we reject all the elements, excepting Love, which compose Religion, and we also abandon that which imparts a religious character to Love; in other words, we confess that it has been necessary to raise the instinct of Love to the dignity of Religion, because we have lost all true religious feeling. Certainly religion is not a shark, as the inquisitors believed it to be, but neither is it a mollusk; a shark can at any rate inspire dread, but a mollusk is simply stupid and disgusting.

In making this remark, we have not the least intention of denying the high value of Love, but only of reminding people that they have no right to take a part, even the noblest, for the whole. Love is only one of the numerous forms in which Morality is displayed as sentiment; and sentiment itself is only one of the forms under which the moral element is produced in the mind, neither is the true basis of Morality to be found in any of these psychological factors. Love can be natural; it can even be moral, without having in the remotest degree any religious character. To declare Love as such to be Religion is to deny the essential nature of Religion; and to call all secular relations into which Love enters by the name 'religious' is to turn people's attention away from that which alone is truly religious.

We need not be surprised to find that a system which has

every possible reason to conceal its Metaphysics from view, which has a cultus wrapt up in inconsistencies, and a Morality detached from Metaphysics and from Religion, floating in the air and knowing not where to rest,—we need not wonder that such a system as this should be unable to satisfy the religious need. Liberal Protestantism is a historical phenomenon which has necessarily become irreligious, firstly, because it has taken as its measuring-line the interests of Modern Civilization, and has attempted to recast Christianity on that pattern; secondly, because this Modern Civilization which was to be the model for Christianity to copy has itself an irreligious character, inasmuch as it owes its birth to the struggle of the secular principle against Religion.

Now, Religion universally arises from the feeling of dismay which the human mind experiences when confronted with the evil and sin in the world, and from the desire to explain their existence, and, if possible, to overcome them. The man who does not feel himself beset by any evils or tainted by any guilt, he, indeed, will have no cause to send his thoughts further than the interests of this world. But the man who asks himself, ‘Why must I endure these evils?’ and ‘How shall I reconcile my sin-laden conscience with itself?’ he is on the road to Religion; in other words, he is a likely man to trouble himself about questions and interests which go beyond the interests of this world. One man lays greater stress on the evil of pain, while another gives more attention to the idea of guilt; but, in both cases, it is discontentment with the things of this world which leads men to Religion, either discontentment with the evils which have to be endured or with a natural disposition which causes him to fall into sin. If the painful sensations caused by suffering and by sin are not strong enough to outweigh the agreeable sensations of worldly existence, then the streams of religious feeling will be mere passing currents, brief spasms of emotion without any lasting influence on the habitual disposition of the mind. But, when

the painful doubts produced by the existence of evil, and when the pangs of anguish in the conscience, outweigh the joys of life and become the regular occupants of the mind, in other words, when the mind reaches the pessimistic conception of the Universe, then first is Religion able to establish itself firmly and permanently in the heart of a man. Where the pessimistic view of life is absent, *there* Religion cannot grow spontaneously, if at all. The respect for the external forms of Religion, which education inculcates upon men, is only able to provide them with the outward show of religiousness.

Christianity, like all real Religions, sprang from the pessimistic conception of the Universe, and, up to the time of the Renaissance, Christian religiousness continued to have its roots in Pessimism. But from the epoch of the Renaissance commenced the struggle between the Pagan love of life and the Christian hatred of this world and avoidance of it; from that time, the decline of faith in happiness beyond the grave made men look more eagerly after earthly joys which previously they had disdained through hope of celestial happiness. Rationalism hastened to justify, in theory, the Optimism which the Pagan Renaissance had favoured in practice; and Liberal Protestantism, keeping pace with Modern Civilization, lives and moves in this Pagan glorification of life and in this pleasant Optimism; that is to say, it adopts the cosmic conception which is as unfavourable as possible to religiousness. Liberal Protestantism lives by open compromise, and it has a special talent for getting adroitly out of an affair; this talent it takes care to use when standing face to face with the evils and sin in the world, which do not look so terrible, after all, if one contemplates them with the good-humour and placid, easy-going temper of a Protestant pastor. Strange to say, moreover, the orthodox and the Liberals are, on this point, as like each other as two peas. The Reformers, I admit, used to look very melancholy about this miserable world which belonged to the devil but, nevertheless, in secret they gave

him a little finger, and we all know that the devil, in such cases, knows how to gain possession of the whole hand. In theory, the modern orthodox disciples of Luther still express themselves strongly on the subject of this utterly corrupt and wicked world sighing under the curse of God ; but, in practice, they feel themselves perfectly at home in this wicked world, which gives them, as a recompense for their sufferings, a parsonage where they can keep a wife, and a cow in the stable ; so they are quite as much at their ease as the Liberals who praise this world as the best of all possible worlds. This may be very sensible, very natural, very idyllic, or very anything else on their part, but *Christian* it is not, nor *religious*. Are any more proofs required of the extent to which this satisfied and worldly spirit, that is, this irreligiousness of Protestantism, is carried ? We need only listen to the angry cries raised by these Liberal Protestants against persons who dare to disturb them in the midst of their jolly Pagan life, their calm leisure hours, and their admiration of this glorious world ; against those who try to open the eyes of contemporary Humanity to the nothingness of all that this world contains, to the depth and universality of woe, to the illusory nature of the majority of this world's joys and of those which are the most sought after. 'Stone the wretch,' they cry out, 'who dares to lay a sacrilegious hand on our sanctuary, Earthly Happiness ! Why, if such doctrines as his once become general, who knows but that men will end by turning religious again, and Liberal Protestantism with all its snug comfort will vanish.'<sup>1</sup>

To sum up. Liberal Protestantism consists of a vague, dull, and incomplete Metaphysic which avoids all criticizing gaze as much as possible ; of a cultus, fortunately, free from any mystery, but still not exempt from contradictions, and of a

<sup>1</sup> Compare A. Taubert's *Pessimism and its Opponents* (*Der Pessimismus und seine Gegner*, Berlin, Carl Duncker, 1873), on the value of Pessimism from the various standpoints of Morality, History, Art, and Religion, and also on the baselessness of the ordinary prejudices against it.

moral code divorced from Metaphysics, and therefore irreligious. Moreover, Liberal Protestantism rests on a conception of the Universe, which, on account of its optimistic and satisfied character, is not in a position to create a Religion, and which must, sooner or later, let the fragments of religiousness retained by it perish from starvation in the midst of secular satisfaction. This result of our study will suffice to justify the charge of irreligiousness which we bring against Liberal Protestantism. By this charge we do not, in the least, assert that all its partisans are irreligious men ; we only contend that the very principle of the system is irreligious, and that, if it should have a lasting influence on Humanity, it will leave of religiousness only some sorry scraps barely deserving to be called 'religious.'

## VIII.

### THE NECESSITY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

THE result of our investigations seems to have definitely decided the question with which we began our inquiry, namely, whether, at the present crisis, a transformation of the existing religious ideas is necessary, or an innovation consecrating essentially different conceptions. The latter alternative is the one to be taken. The Catholic theory which is the principle of authority, and the Protestant theory which criticizes authority from a hostile standpoint, have each drawn their ultimate conclusions; the former in the mummified Christianity of Ultramontaniam and in the dogma of Infallibility, which is a gauntlet of defiance thrown down at all Reason and Civilization, the latter, through the entire dissolution of positive Christianity and by the weakening and declining of Religion into a purely worldly irreligiousness. All attempts to strike a route between these equally unwelcome, extreme paths have been made on the narrow inclined plane of Protestantism, and have already been superseded by others in the course of historical Evolution. To go over these again would be to place oneself in front of the wheels of the logically necessary Evolution, in order to impede, if not to push, them back.

The Christian Idea has come to the end of its career, which comprises two periods; the first, primitive Christianity and the Catholic epoch up to the flourishing of the Christian 'Truth' under St. Thomas d'Aquino; the second, the decline



of Catholicism and the labours of Protestantism to establish compromises useful, doubtless, in practice and for a time, but unacceptable in principle or for long. The end wonderfully resembles the beginning in having no body of Christian doctrine, but is very different from it in its positive contents; for primitive Christianity had the Talmudian Judaism of Hillel the Jew, while Liberal Protestantism has the ideas of Modern Civilization. The ordinate of the Christian curve has become equal to zero at the end as it was at the commencement, but now the abscissa is quite a different one without the possibility of comparison.

Christianity shares with other Religions the pessimistic conception of the Universe, and the impulse to rise beyond this world and its miseries by means of metaphysical truth; but the specifically fundamental idea of Christianity is the belief in a Redeemer who cures men of the consciousness of guilt (evil being here considered secondary), and in a Mediator who brings about reconciliation and union with God. The Christian Faith, then, is the belief that Jesus Christ is this Redeemer and Mediator. But if Jesus is considered to be the legitimate son of the carpenter Joseph and of his wife Mary, this Jesus and His death can no more redeem me from my sins than, for example, Bismarck or the late Deputy Lasker could; and he is less fitted to be a Mediator between me and God than, for example, the Catholic confessor is, who has God's Son and the saints to help him. Accordingly, the idea, which forms the very basis of Christianity, has become quite repulsive to Modern Culture. It is possible that the remnants left of Christianity may be put into the framework of a religious system starting on a new principle, and may obtain a secondary and auxiliary importance which ought not to be under-estimated. But this remainder is impotent, by itself, to satisfy the religious need, especially if the indispensable pre-supposition of all religiousness be rejected, namely, Pessimism, which positive Christianity teaches. But, even if this

factor be retained, or if it were re-established in opposition to the Optimism of Protestantism which finds the world very satisfactory and rejoices in it, then what we should have would always be merely the undoubtedly indispensable foundation of the new religious edifice, and nothing more. We should have a conception of the Universe, implying that our minds were so disposed that Religion is to us a veritable need, we should have a theory about life like that held by The Buddha, Jesus, St. Paul, St. John, St. Francis, Savonarola, and others. We should always be face to face with the question of discovering what new religious edifice would be likely to give satisfaction, both to the religious need born of this disposition of mind, and to Modern Civilization. .

Any attempt at giving a direct answer to this question would imply that the respondent claimed to be the founder of a new Religion. Such a pretension lies far from me, not only on account of personal reasons, but also because I am convinced that Science, by its very nature, and the representatives of Science are not absolutely qualified to have a direct influence on the establishment of a new Religion. History shows this to be the case, and it is also proved by the relations between Science and Religion, which we discussed in our third chapter. In truth, founders of Religions owe their great and decisive successes among the masses, never to the help of Science, but to their gift of presenting in clear and figurative language the religious ideas which are in harmony with the time; and, secondly, to the authority of the personality representing those ideas. But, nevertheless, these men do not originate those ideas which act like sparks, they draw them out of the mental treasury constituted, in every age, by the popular beliefs and by Science. Among those ideas which come to their knowledge only in a very imperfect form, they light on some which powerfully seize upon their religious feeling. In communicating these ideas to an extended circle, they discover the enthusiasm which may be kindled there;

circumstances of the time may have previously disposed the feelings of the masses to receive such impressions, but perhaps the power of these ideas has been overlooked or under-estimated by others. This will enlighten us on the nature of the assistance which Science can give towards the hatching of (to use a metaphor) Religions not yet born, but the need of which exists and increases; Science's task is to work with zeal and loyalty, to take its most vigorous flight in profoundness and many-sidedness, in order to offer to the future a store of ideas as rich and valuable as possible, from which the eventual new Religion can one day be formed.

Is there any probability of our seeing, in the immediate future, the rise of a creative force capable of producing new religious forms which would be permanent? It would be rather hazardous to answer in the affirmative. For who has so accurately estimated the tenacity and the historical power of resistance inherent in the religious forms surrounding us as to make such an assertion? Would it not be estimating them too low, if we declared that, at the present time, when the scouts of the Liberal Protestant army have hardly begun to be conscious of the final consequences of the Protestant theory, the old faith, which is the Religion of the masses, is already sufficiently fallen and decayed to allow a fresh and enlivening breeze of religious feeling to blow it out of the way. We must not forget that, in point of enlightenment which is acquired by Culture, the masses are always some centuries behind the spirit of the age. Nay, more, even if this point had been reached in the process of religious Evolution, that would be no reason why the advent of a new faith should necessarily follow. It may very well happen that the reigns of the old faith and of the new should be separated by an interregnum of longer or shorter duration, pending which the dissolution of the old elements will be completed; in this following time the soil will undergo a chemical preparation which will render, in the future, a fresh fertility.

Moreover, we cannot prove the impossibility of the proposition asserting that, on the whole, there will no more be any *permanent* religious novelty, although this opinion is as extreme and as improbable as that which declares the Religion of the Future to be at hand. The former assertion is, indeed, supported by the apparently plausible argument that the life of the emotions becomes stifled more and more by the increasing activity and power of the intellect, and that, in particular, the religious emotions are constantly declining in strength. But, in the first place, there is a confusion made here between a momentary phenomenon and a permanent tendency of Development; secondly, to this tendency, which is admittedly real in a certain sense, is given an interpretation erroneous as regards both its reaction on religiousness and on feeling in general. It is true that conscious intelligence is that which is debated about in the first rank among the progressive movements of Humanity; but, in time, each acquisition of the intellect exercises on the sphere of the emotions an influence which enriches and refines them. The struggle of the intellect against the emotions is always directed solely against the mental attitude bequeathed to the emotions by an earlier phase of intellectual development; but there is no dispute with emotions corresponding to the new phase of intelligence, which can only begin to grow after the partial destruction of the old. No one will deny that intellectual development advances with energetic and constant strides; it is equally certain that a new Religion must adopt Reason as one of its principles, whereas the old Religions only found it necessary to give Reason a secondary place. But does it follow from this that the religious need must decrease ever more and more? Not at all, at least not as long as the masses are not thoroughly imbued with abstract Science properly so called, and we cannot expect that they will ever be so. On the contrary, the pessimistic conception of the Universe, from which the religious need springs, will not cease to spread,

For the more Humanity sees the means multiplied of making existence pleasant, the more will it be convinced of the impossibility of conquering, in this manner, the misery of life, and of attaining to happiness or even to contentment. A period of onward progress in worldly affairs can be favourable to Optimism only as long as it hopes to find and enjoy happiness at the end; but, the instant the aim is attained, the people who strove for it perceive that they are no happier, and that the tormenting needs, which prey on their minds, are only increased. Optimism, therefore, is never anything but an interlude among the nations who are engaged in the flight of worldly activity. But Pessimism is the fundamental, permanent disposition of Humanity arrived at self-consciousness, and it appears with renewed activity at the close of each epoch of secular progress. The aspirations, therefore, of Humanity to overcome this world's misery, if only in idea and in consciousness, grow always more intense and vigorous at the end of epochs when this world and its interests have absorbed and secularized men's attention; and therefore, also, the religious question will become the most burning of all, when Humanity shall have attained all that it can attain in point of Civilization on earth, and then takes in, at a glance, the utter pitiable-ness of this situation—the pinnacle of earthly aims.

However, when Science undertakes, as such, to make preparations for the structure which the Religion of the Future will occupy, we shall not blame it for examining its actual stock of materials or for asking itself what ideas are likely to hereafter take the place of Christianity, and to absorb the *few remaining* Christian ideas which are fated to survive the rest. But, of course, the value of this examination is limited by the actual state of knowledge. The investigation will best be carried out by casting a general glance at the present historical importance of the principal Religions; this survey will also help to prove an assertion which is borne

out by the existing international relations among the nations of the world. I refer to the contention that a Religion which would become a Universal Religion in the Future, must represent a synthesis of the religious development of the East and also of the West, of Pantheistic Evolution and of Monotheistic Evolution. Unless both these conditions are really fulfilled, no Religion will be able to pay due attention both to the religious and to the intellectual requirements of the Modern Epoch.

The following hasty sketch will show what ideas Science with all its riches can contribute to serve as material for Religion. This sketch will not claim to prescribe to the Religion of the Future what paths it should follow ; but it will, at any rate, strongly advocate the immediate dropping of the unphilosophical distinction between 'Heathen' and 'Christians.' It will strive, with cosmopolitan impartiality, to give their respective rights to Civilizations apparently unconnected with, and standing in no relation to, each other, namely, the Hindu Civilization and the Civilization of the countries washed by the Mediterranean. And, moreover, it will indicate reasons why the future meeting of these great religious streams, and their flowing together in a single channel, may be confidently expected. It is only thus that Universal History comes to mean anything real, for one ordinarily understands by this name, merely the History of the Western half of the ancient world, the Civilization of Central Asia being neglected, as if it were—to use the expression—a mere fifth wheel on the car of History.

We are not, therefore, going to consider the actual Religion of the Future, which a thick fog veils from our gaze, but only the materials furnished by History, Religion, and Philosophy, which may seem to us likely to prove useful endowments for that coming creed.

## IX.

### THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

At first Religion shows itself indifferent to Theism, or to Pantheism, or to Monotheism, or to Polytheism, and presents phases of all these elements. Consciousness has not yet realized the import of the differences which we mark in opposing transcendence to immanence, unity to multiplicity; it represents its deity, according to the needs of the moment, as exterior to, or as immanent in the Universe, as one god or as many gods. Religion begins with the adoration of the forces of Nature, and, therefore, the tendency of all primitive Religions necessarily leads to Polytheism. The childish mind, which thinks by help of metaphors, cannot rid itself of anthropomorphism and anthropopathism; accordingly, it applies this method of interpretation to the various forces of Nature, which thus become various personal deities. Yet it is part of the essence of these forces to be immanent in Nature, and their conflicts do not dispel the notion, created by Religion, that there is a connection, a unity among all the natural phenomena. Each of the principal natural forces appears to the primitive religionist to be identical with the others in being a revelation of the supernatural, of the divine: accordingly, primitive Religion uses on every occasion, without scruple, the figure of speech called *synecdoche*,—the part for the whole, *pars pro toto*,—that is, it adores each natural force as God, in the sense of being a manifestation of the universal

divine power.<sup>1</sup> The primitive religious consciousness does not yet perceive the contradiction in which it is placed by the anthropomorphizing work of its imagination. It does not perceive the contradiction, because it still anthropomorphizes everything (as language already proves), and also because it is not yet thoroughly in earnest with its anthropomorphisms, which only serve as means to connect ideas and to arrange them in the orders which alone are familiar to it at that stage of mental development. But, as the masses cling to and get accustomed to these anthropomorphisms which are more intelligible to them than any other ideas, the forms of deities, whose meaning was originally symbolical, are materialized and become real persons with fixed spheres of activity. The symbol thus stifling the thought which created it, the consciousness of the unity of the divine power is lost in the petrifications of Polytheism, where it subsists as a mere afterthought, obscure and incomprehensible, discoverable only by minds of deep thought and inquiry.

Thus it is that we find Polytheism in most of the nations who belong to History. Polytheism is the corruption of an earlier and more elevated standpoint, which could not be maintained in its naive innocence, because it had not recognised as such the differences which are prefigured in it, and had not intellectually vanquished them. Everywhere Polytheism tends to creep, under some disguise or other, into purer religious systems, because it always offers to the uncultured masses that form of mechanical religious cultus, which is, so to speak, the easiest and the most empty of ideas. The special task of the religious Evolution of the historical epoch is to conquer that element of primitive religion, which brings about the degeneration into Polytheism, and which

<sup>1</sup> This relation comes out with sufficient clearness in the Vedas. Compare Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Religion*, Vol. i., Nos. i. and iii., and particularly pp. 24 and following,—in the German Translation.



secures to Polytheism such a long life; I mean the tendency of the human mind, under strong sense impressions, to anthropomorphize the divine Power. It is only by this victory over anthropomorphism that we shall ever be enabled to preserve, one and all, the admissible elements of primitive Religion, namely, the unity of the divine Power, its immanence and the multiplicity of its manifestations.

In order to accomplish this, History has followed two paths, neither of which could attain the end required, because each of them regarded it from a one-sided point of view, but which, taken together, enable us to clearly recognize the goal of History. The East took the way which, apparently, went more to the bottom of things, and was the more comprehensive; it did not wish to abandon multiplicity which is justified by being the internal complexity of the One; and it also carefully retained the doctrine of immanence, which is so important for the religious sentiment, and it wished to ensure the unity of the Divine by recognizing the One which is all, which animates all, which shows itself working in all its human and divine manifestations. This form of Religion is Brahmanism. And, according to this faith, everything is a manifestation of Brahm, the sole Being, eternal and impersonal, having the attributes of existence, knowledge and felicity, which, firstly, manifests its creating, preserving, and destroying activity in the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva), and then displays its divine essence in numberless entities. Unfortunately, the many gods are only a stumbling-block to the popular imagination. The Divinity, one impersonal, immanent is retained indeed in theory, but only as an esoteric doctrine which the masses care nothing about, for they attend only to the manifold personal forms in which the All-one is manifested, these forms seeming nearer to them. The religious system of Brahmanism is free from anthropomorphism at the summit, but this anthropomorphism all the more uninterruptedly luxuriates around the steps which lead

down from the metaphysical summit to the broad physical basis.

Judaism followed the opposite route. It chooses from the many deities one to be its tribal god, and makes with him a compact of a synallagmatic nature (the ancient alliance). Now those old Jews had as firm a belief in the divinity of other deities worshipped by neighbouring tribes as these tribes themselves possessed; only they thought that their own god was the strongest, they trusted in his promises, and believed that they ought to be faithful to him in return for the benefits which he had bestowed on their fathers. As the national feeling of the Jews grew stronger, their pride in their god increased. From the time when they exalted him to the position of sole creator of heaven and earth, they were obliged to consider as illegitimate the authority of other gods on the earth made by Yahweh, and to hope, in honour of him, that one day all nations would be converted to him, and would adore him as the supreme god and the sole creator of the Universe. But Monotheism, as it develops and progresses, at last arrives at the conviction that foreign gods are false, unreal gods, not merely deities exercising an illegitimate rule on the earth by the side of Yahweh. This implies, of course, that the religious consciousness has now raised its conception of deity or divinity so high, by taking its supreme god as the standard of comparison, that the foreign gods no longer answer to this conception, and fall to the rank of demons who have falsely given themselves out for gods in order to obtain undeserved homage. It is in Muhammedanism that Monotheism most strongly, expressly (and intolerantly) speaks out on this point, for the abstract unity of the Deity becomes, in that Religion, the centre of religious fanaticism. Yet such fanaticism cannot maintain itself for any length of time unless the unity of the Deity be threatened with attacks from some quarter, for example, by the Christian Trinity, or by the divine honours paid to Muhammed, or by any other similar innovation.

We have here, then, an Evolution going in a direction contrary to the Evolution of Brahmanism from Polytheism. By a sort of Natural Selection in the struggle for existence among the gods, that god came out conqueror over the others, and he alone, thus, survived as god, who was religiously the strongest; all the others were stripped of their divine dignity by him. Certainly, by this means, the unity of the Deity was re-established, and was, at any rate, brought within the reach of the intellectual consciousness of the whole nation. But, as the notion of the One God had been evolved out of an anthropomorphic form of Polytheism, it remained wrapt up in the grossest anthropopathism, which forced it to be transcendental, and it did not quench the thirst of the religious sentiment for an immanent God, except by giving to it something as unsatisfying as a stone would be to a hungry man asking for bread. We do not ignore the fact that the Old Testament, in individual passages, makes feeble efforts to arrive at the idea of God's immanence, but they were only passing fancies of the Jewish religious sentiment, which are overwhelmed by the opposing doctrine of the transcendental personality of the Jewish Deity.

Thus we find that the Hindu Aryans preserved in Brahmanism the immanence of the impersonal Deity, but not without sacrificing the unity, at least, as regards the consciousness of the masses. The Semites, on the contrary, gave to all the unity of the Deity, but at the cost of the abandonment of his immanence, which is compatible only with an impersonal Deity. Brahmanism, its higher aspirations notwithstanding, remained fixed in that very anthropomorphic apotheosis of the manifestations of the one supersensible Essence in the midst of multiple Nature. Judaism and Muhammedanism sever the threads of communication between the multiplicity of the phenomena and the unity of the Essence, for fear of doing injury to the latter in its abstract form; and they reduce the constant function of the Divine Being in its manifestations in

Nature to the single act—done once for all—of a creation relegated to the past. This contrast is too characteristic not to betray to us that it is connected with the psychological peculiarities of race, belonging to the Aryan Hindus on the one side, and to the Semitic Jews and Arabs on the other. The contrast does not, as M. Rénan maintains, lie between Polytheism and Monotheism,—for Aryans and Semites alike are polytheists,—it consists, rather, in the methods which they employ to get rid of this Polytheism common to them both, the former adopting Pantheistic Monism, while abstract personal Monotheism is preferred by the latter.

The conflict between the esoteric Metaphysics of Brahmanism and the exoteric popular Religion evoked a Reformer. The Buddha summed up the doctrines of the Vedânta and Sâṅkhya Philosophy,<sup>1</sup> and preached them to the masses as a new Gospel bringing salvation. His teaching recognized neither gods nor priests; but, unfortunately, he threw away—to use a metaphor—all the straw along with the useless stubble; he rejected all the polytheistic popular deities, but at the same time he abandoned the metaphysical divinity, the substance of the Universe, the essence underlying all phenomena. The Buddha, then, preached pure Atheism. His error in believing that the Universe is only the apparition of a Nothing, would not have been possible without the subjective Idealism which makes of the Universe a dream, an Idealism widely spread among the Hindus from time immemorial, and which has so little belief in any reality whatsoever, that it does not even comprehend the logical necessity of the existence of an Essence behind the phenomena. Therefore (when considered from the standpoint of Realism), the Buddha's teaching is acosmism as well as Atheism. Without such premisses about the theory of knowledge, it would not

<sup>1</sup> The English reader should study *The Sâṅkhya Aphorisms of Kapila*. Translated by J. R. Ballantyne; edited by Fitz Edward Hall. London: Trübner & Co. [Translator's note.]

have been possible to found an atheistic Religion. Unfortunately, also, Buddhism could not keep itself free from the popular tendencies which everywhere produce anthropomorphism and Polytheism. The Buddha himself became deified as Jesus afterwards was; the Nirvana, which he had proclaimed as the supreme aim, was transformed into a Paradise of positive happiness; the hierarchy which he interdicted was re-established in all its glory, just as the priesthood was among the Christians in spite of Christ's prohibition. The corrupted form of Buddhism no longer differed from Brahmanism in principle sufficiently to be capable of resisting, in the countries where it arose, a reaction in favour of the older Religion. Nevertheless, we must, in justice, recognize the truth that Buddhism is a stricter form of Monism than Brahmanism ever was, and that its Ethics, so similar to Johannean Christianity, form a great step of progress in the religious history of the East.

Compared with the Religion of the Roman Empire, that is, with a Polytheism exhausted, worn out, and spiritless, the Monotheism of the Jews stood out as an imposing religious force. One thing only prevented it from successful propagandism; it was fettered by the troublesome and childish restrictions of the Mosaic Law claiming to rule over the most insignificant action. Directly St. Paul had thrown down this barrier, Jewish Monotheism began its march of conquest along the countries washed by the Mediterranean. As long as the Aryan populations of these lands considered the god of the Christians to be merely one of the numerous deities then lately imported from the East, and a member of the polytheistic Pantheon, he suited their Aryan ideas. But when the strictness of Jewish Monotheism made itself felt, there arose a reaction on the part of the Aryan popular mind against the doctrine of the abstract unity which had been imposed on it; and, in virtue of their psychological characteristics, the Aryans overthrew the Monotheism with the help of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Exactly resembling the Brahmanic Trimurti, the Trinity embraces three fundamental activities of the Deity, which are anthropomorphized into three divine persons; only the three activities in the Christian Trinity are different, and consist of creation, redemption, and sanctification. The contradiction which in the primitive Religion of the Vedas still slumbers unperceived, which in the Jewish attempt at solution is glaringly shown by the severance of the multiplicity from the one root, comes to full light in the Trinity of the Brahmans and of the Christians, the contradiction, namely, that one is three and three are one. The Brahmans have got rid of the contradiction by representing the impersonal Brahm as the one Essence underlying the three divine persons, which is manifested as phenomena in all three of them. For fifteen centuries the Christians have been entangled in this contradiction, because they had not the courage to resolve it after the fashion of the Brahmans. In reality, the formula, 'one Substance or one Essence in three Persons,' led them near enough to that result; but already the Jewish anthropopathism of the transcendental personality of the supreme God was implanted too firmly in the dogma for them not to fear, as heretical, the frank profession of the consistency which recognized a Divinity one and impersonal, which is all including the three gods.

Nevertheless, it is clear that neither one of the three Persons, nor even a fourth Person, can constitute the substantial identity between the three; an impersonal, divine substance must be recognised as forming the identical Essence of the three Persons, and in relation to which the three Persons, necessarily, stand only as methods of manifestation, as modes or forms of phenomena. But then, this impersonal, divine substance is the inner and specific essence of the three divine modes of manifestation, the all-one and only true Divinity, the metaphysical summit of the Christian Metaphysic, and which alone is able to justify its name of Monotheism before

the tribunal of Reason. Regarded from this standpoint, the three personified modes of manifestation of this one impersonal Divinity can only appear as fantastical anthropomorphizings of the divine functions exactly as in Brahmanism, with the sole difference that natural functions are partly replaced by mystico-ethical functions. The link (severed by Judaism) between the divine Essence and the phenomenal world of Nature at any given time (for example, Man) Christianity could not fasten again, except by having recourse to heretical mysticism, or by indulging in slight passing fancies which wrecked the dogma of the Deity's personality. However, Christianity furnished itself with an imperfect substitute for this link by re-establishing within the transcendental Deity the relation of Essence and of manifestation, with his character of immanence, and by thus putting before itself an ideal (unattainable, doubtless, with the admitted premisses) of the mode in which Man ought to be united with God, and of the way in which the multiplicity of natural phenomena ought to be absorbed in the divine unity as in the essence which is these phenomena themselves.

This profound, metaphysical meaning of the Trinity was quite misunderstood by the modern Protestants belonging to the Rationalistic 'epoch of Enlightenment.' Instead of energetically following up the correction of the abstract unity of the transcendental Jewish Monotheism, this modern Protestantism relapsed into the Jewish standpoint, by eliminating two Persons of the Trinity and keeping the third as a Personal God, who remained as external and opposed to Man as he had ever been before. In fact, however, these Reformers were undecided about taking in earnest the idea that Man ought to be one with the Deity just as the three anthropomorphic, divine forms of the Trinity are one with their Divine Essence. That proposition needed only one correction; the 'ought to be' should have been altered into 'is,' from the time when [with Hegel and Biedermann] one rejected the unjustifiable,

polytheistic and anthropomorphic personifications of the principal modes of manifestation of the Deity, and when the idea had been re-introduced that the Deity is one, impersonal, but also immanent in the Universe which manifests him. Then, and only then, would the problem have been solved, namely, how to unite Monotheism and Pantheism by eliminating all anthropomorphism and anthropopathism; in other words, how to get a Monotheism of which the Deity is not separated by his personality from Man, and a Pantheism which is not corrupted by any Polytheism.

Christianity, with its fundamental dogma of the Trinity, may be regarded as the first attempt at a synthesis of the Aryan and Semitic religious Evolutions. But the attempt failed in two ways; the lofty conception of the divine impersonality, which renders immanence possible, was not reached and grasped with clearness and precision; secondly, the re-appearance of the Polytheism of the old Brahmanic Trimurti previously overthrown by Buddhism, was the price which had to be paid for the gain already lost. Nevertheless, the tendency alone of the attempt and the fervour with which nearly two thousand years have clung to the contradictions of the Trinity, furnish such a mine of instruction that this form of Religion with all its want of maturity and depth cannot be cut out of History. It shows us, in conjunction with Buddhism in its purest form, the way in which we must advance; the abolition of Polytheism and of transcendency, a twofold progress which presupposes the abandonment of the anthropopathic conception and of the personification of the Deity. We are to-day as zealous Monotheists as are the Jews and the Muhammedans, and we are as zealous adherents of the doctrine of the Deity's immanence as are the Hindus. We wish to utterly extirpate the Polytheism of Christianity [both the saint-worship of Catholicism and the tritheism of Lutheranism], just as a Rationalist desires, but we, for our part, do not care to exchange the impersonal Divine Substance immanent in the



three Gods of the Trinity for the personal Deity worshipped by the Jews and by the Muhammedans, who remains eternally opposed to (and removed from) all his creation, including Mankind.

Christianity, in spite of its Aryan tendencies to transform itself, has remained, on the whole, faithful to its Semitic origin whence it sprang. And to-day, as in the second century, it is through the speaking-trumpet of Philosophy that the Aryan spirit addresses its challenges to the traditional Semitism. Then it was Greek Philosophy in its Alexandrian modification aided by Egyptian influences; to-day it is German Philosophy in the form of Pantheism or of Spiritual Monism, which has been built up on the Kantian criticism of Rationalistic Theism, and may be regarded as the continuation of Greek Philosophy on a much higher level of consciousness. Hegel elaborated a grandiose system founded on the postulate of the Divine Immanence; and the 'Word made Flesh' of St. John is represented by Hegel as the destiny of Man in general, especially in proportion as he has become conscious of the Divine Immanence. Thus, indeed, Hegel, though without knowing it, directly attaches himself to that branch of Hindu Philosophy which, in the Tao-te-king of Lautsze,<sup>1</sup> has put forth such a magnificent blossoming free from Hindu fantasy. Nevertheless, Hegel sees the Absolute Religion in his arbitrary transformation and dialectical interpretation of Christianity (especially in the Logos-doctrine of the Fourth Gospel). Schopenhauer, on the contrary, plunges into the cosmic conception of the Vedas and of Buddhism; he revived their subjective Idealism, which compares the Universe to a dream,

<sup>1</sup> Translated into German by R. Plaenckner, Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1870; compare, in particular, xxi., xl., xlv., li.

[The English reader should study *The Speculations on Metaphysics, Polity, and Morality* of the 'Old Philosopher,' Lautsze, translated from the Chinese with an Introduction by John Chalmers, M.A., Trübner & Co., London, 1868.]—Translator's note.

their Pessimism [which is far more profound than that of Christianity], and also he resuscitated the Ethics and the Nirvana of Buddhism. Thus Philosophy, anticipating the history of Religious Evolution, revives the more or less useful elements of Hinduism, brings them near to the consciousness of Modern Culture, and prepares a future synthesis of them with the transformed doctrines of (or the elements fit to be retained of) the Jewish-Christian religious development. One task remains for German Philosophy to fulfil; namely, to blend the religious ideas of Central Asia, which have been grasped in fragments by Hegel, Schopenhauer, Fichte, Schelling, Herbart, and others,—to blend them, I say, with the elements of Christianity which are worth preserving, and with the series of ideas developed by Modern Civilization. [and finding for the most part already their expression in Hegel], so as to produce a thoroughly compact system. By this means a metaphysical conception of the Universe would be obtained, which, gradually infiltrating into the deepest recesses of the consciousness of the masses, might offer the conditions the most favourable to the growth of a new religious life replacing the extinct Christian life. If, up to the present time, religious Philosophy has taken a wrong path, the reason is that she fancied it was necessary to regard and to defend as absolute Religion one only out of many religious systems; Hegel (for example) fixed upon the Christian Religion, while Schopenhauer was attracted by the Asiatic group of 'the venerable, primitive Religions of Mankind.' The progress of the critical spirit ought, necessarily, to open our eyes to the uselessness of these efforts, and to teach the Philosophy of Religion to circumscribe its task; it has now only to point out the factors philosophically tenable and capable of assisting new religious creations, which are met with in all religions, and particularly in those the most highly developed; and, next, to point out the aims of the History of the development convergent on Religion in the various seats of Civilization.

We have already pointed out, more than once, that transcendental Personal Theism has become quite unacceptable to the modern consciousness, both in itself and in its consequences (heteronomous Morality, theodicy, undetermined Free-Will, etc.). Only a respectable but uncritical and unphilosophical Conservatism can be deluded on this point. But along with this impossibility of Theism comes a question of vital importance to Religiousness and to the ideals of Humanity, namely, how Pantheism is to be brought into the consciousness of the nations who represent Modern Civilization; for if Pantheism does not penetrate there or arrives late, the inevitable consequence will be that irreligious Materialistic Naturalism must occupy the empty place. And indeed this phenomenon presents itself every day before our eyes, but always only in those regions where German Pantheistic Philosophy has not yet penetrated with its light and warmth. Heinrich Heine indeed is quite right when he says, 'Pantheism is the secret Religion of Germany.' Certainly it is a sign of the times that, even in Jewish circles, a Philosophy penetrates with pronounced religious tendencies, which takes this saying of Heine for its watchword, which preaches the impersonality and the immanence of the Deity, and also makes a profession of Pessimism.<sup>1</sup> If such things are possible in Semitic Judaism, to which we owe our personal Monotheism, assuredly there is no need to despair or to doubt that, first in purely Aryan Germany, Pantheism, after having been the secret Religion of esoteric Philosophy, should become the general conception of the Universe, firstly, among educated men, and afterwards among the masses, and that it should form the germ of a new religious life.

If the objection be raised that the Pantheism of India has plunged the masses into apathy, the objectors would be

<sup>1</sup> Compare Dr. Moritz Venetianer's *Der Allgeist* [*The Universal Spirit*], Berlin, Carl Duncker, 1874; and his *Schopenhauer als Scholastiker* [*Schopenhauer as Scholastic*], ibidem, 1873.

forgetting the preceding considerations where we saw that Hindu Pantheism was not sufficiently Monotheistic to be able to withstand the encroachments of spirit-destroying Polytheism. Again it would be a mistake to accuse Pantheism of being the cause of the Hindus' dreamy apathy; one ought rather to blame that dreamy subjective Idealism which is a characteristic of their national spirit. The man who regards the Universe, not as a real objective manifestation of the Absolute Essence, but as a subjective phenomenon having no reality, as a dream, as foam, as an illusion, and who consequently declares that space and time are mere forms of intuition, having no correlative forms of real existence, and therefore that History (including the Evolution which works itself out within it) is an illusion without any object behind it,—this man, I say, shuts himself up in his dream-world like a caterpillar in its chrysalis. With such premisses about the theory of knowledge, there truly can no longer be a Metaphysic capable of resisting the apathetic question which is the necessary outcome of them. We must, therefore, also entirely reject that cosmic conception which is derived from this theory of knowledge (unfortunately accepted by Schopenhauer), if we do not wish to lapse, like the Hindus, into absolute indolence.<sup>1</sup> Here is a point where the idea of the Judæo-Muhammedan-Christian world, that is to say, the realistic idea which believes in the reality of Time, of History, and of Evolution, is superior to the Hindu idea; and it is essentially this superiority, which, in contrast to Asiatic stagnation, is the condition of vigorous historical progress of which the Muhammedan-Christian Civilization offers an instance, and which has made the Christian nations the agents and the actual representatives of the progress of Universal History. In Protestantism, realistic Evolution became evolutionistic Optimism, which has been

<sup>1</sup> Compare my work on this subject,—*Das Ding an sich und seine Beschaffenheit* [*The Thing in itself and its Nature*], Berlin, C. Duncker, 1871.

made, especially by Leibnitz and by Hegel, the fundamental idea of Modern Civilization. That this Optimism has passed from the logical-evolutionistic domain to the eudæmonological domain is not very surprising. But this false Optimism of Leibnitz is, in Hegel, already considerably diminished by the latter's open disregard of the individual's happiness, and by the description which he gives of Evolution being accomplished by means of the painful struggles of opposing principles.<sup>1</sup> In Schopenhauer this Optimism runs into the other extreme, namely, the most decided Pessimism, which, moreover, in its turn passes, by an equally unjustifiable transition, from eudæmonism to evolutionism. Without eudæmonological Pessimism must evolutionistic Optimism necessarily lead to irreligious Secularism; without evolutionistic Optimism must eudæmonological Pessimism become an indolent despondency, or degenerate into religious asceticism. Only by combining the two can we get a conception of the Universe, which, firstly, gives to Reality and to the Evolution of the terrestrial part of it their rights, and, secondly, avoids the mistake of regarding this Reality as final, of attributing value to it in itself and for itself, and which, by its metaphysical, objective Idealism, soars above the worthlessness of this Universe which does not deserve to exist.

Christianity, as has often been remarked, has also its point of departure from eudæmonological Pessimism, but it mars this separation by an egoistic amalgamation with a transcendental, eudæmonological Optimism which rests on the belief in individual immortality, and on the eternal felicity promised to the pious man. Thus a metaphysical egoism is harboured, refined indeed, but therefore all the more pernicious to true Morality, which is founded on renunciation; and thus the pessimistic judgment of the real actual world ceases to have any but a relative, transient importance. The present age imperatively

<sup>1</sup> Compare I. Volkelt's *Das Unbewusste und der Pessimismus* [*The Unconscious and Pessimism*], Berlin, Henschel, 1873, pp. 246-255.

demands that Morality should be purged from all kinds of egoism, whether gross or refined, and therefore cannot retain this belief in heavenly rewards, but must rather attach itself to Pessimism, which, in its unfalsified form, does not seek for any illusion about a fancied future existence in order to deceive itself about the misery of this life, and which knows only one aspiration for the individual as such, namely, to become freed from the painful duty of assisting in the process of Evolution, to plunge itself again into the Brahman like the bubble into the ocean, to be extinguished like a light in the wind, and to be no more 'born again,' as the exoteric expression, suitable to the popular belief, phrases it. This is the full expression for the aspiration of the purely religious soul which aims not at felicity but at peace, and at union with the Universal Spirit, a union complete and no more troubled by any apparent separation; yet this soul is one which, as an individual, patiently fulfils all moral duties until the hour strikes for its deliverance.

In the place of the belief in individual continuance of life after death,—a low and pernicious belief,—Pantheism offers to the religious sentiment the profound emotion and the high satisfaction of feeling itself eternally one with its God, without the possibility of separation, man being himself a manifestation of God, in which manifestation nothing exists but God. A consciousness of this insight is the aim of the Mystics' most exalted reveries, but this aim they could not reach as long as God appeared to them to be a Person opposed to themselves, and they fancied themselves to be a Substance (though a created one only), and they placed between the two the Personal 'Mediator,' incapable of uniting, and only proving eternally the wideness of the gulf. Yes, Pantheism is the only Religion which realizes the most daring dreams of the Mystics without contradicting Reason; it alone renders dialogues with God totally superfluous, which in Theism are miserable expedients to conceal the want of unity; it renders

such dialogue superfluous by reducing the dualism of Persons, presupposed in the act of prayer, to a simple unity leaving all dialogue far behind, and having infinitely more to offer than a dialogue to the religious sentiment.

In the place of the heteronomous pseudo-Morality of Theism, Pantheism offers to Ethics a metaphysical basis through which the humanitarian Morality (which floats in the air and can only appeal to the good heart of those who wish to accept it), gains, in theory, a foundation and consolidation without losing anything of its autonomy. A Morality devoid of Metaphysic will always be forced to relapse into taking its support from the pseudo-Morality of refined egoism which knows how to prudently calculate (the Ethics of Spinoza and of the Encyclopædists), since, without such a support, there is far too little ground in this kind of Morality to form an ethical foundation. The so-called 'enlightened selfishness' Morality possesses so little of the real ethical element that it cannot even dare to put on the outward appearance of being a system of Ethics, as the heteronomous Morality of Theism has done with such success hitherto; it only claims to be a substitute for real Morality, which it declares to be a mere dream and illusion. But heteronomous Morality is not justified in giving itself airs and disparaging the Morality of 'enlightened selfishness,' for really they each have as little as the other of true Morality, and of the two sorts of pseudo-Morality the 'enlightened selfishness' system has the advantage of being autonomous.

Pantheism, or spiritualistic Monism, is the only system of Metaphysics which, without injuring the objectively real phenomenon of the individual, throws back the self-will, which fancies itself supreme, into the nothingness of its phenomenal existence, by showing it that it does to itself (that is to the Essence which it, as well as its neighbour, is) the wrong which it does to its neighbour, and that it renders

to itself the service which it renders to its neighbour. That, of which compassion and charity have only an instinctive idea when realizing it in practice, the knowledge, namely, that the ego of self-consciousness which is separated from and opposed to the non-ego, is not the true ego, but that the true ego embraces all other men and the whole world,—this great, fundamental, ethical truth is fully expressed by Pantheism alone. The 'tat tvam asi'<sup>1</sup> of the Hindus is a foundation for Ethics infinitely more profound, being real in the strictest sense of the word, than the Christian, anthropomorphic argument according to which we ought to love one another because we are the children of one Father, as if the natural love between brothers was not cancelled by the natural hatred between brothers, and as if the obligation to this love did not *itself* rather need a support in Morality, instead of actually serving as a support. As long as Monism is not the basis of Ethics, everything is dissolved into subjective caprice, in default of being held together by external, heteronomous laws or by a refined egoism; even Reason itself appears to be only a personal caprice (according to which one declares for Reason and refuses to be unreasonable), as long as it is not regarded as an attribute of the One Universal Essence manifested in all individuals, that is, until Reason is recognized as an objective, cosmic force or principle. And, whatever definition we may seek and fix upon as the highest principle of Morality, be it compassion, love, fidelity, justice, universal harmony, solidarity, the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the co-operation with the aims [unconscious] of the Universe, or anything else, all elucidations, such as these, will be only subjective ideas of which one suits one man, another somebody else, but the necessity of their actual realization will never be demonstrated, unless metaphysical Monism be appealed to and bring in its authority.

This proves that in the sphere of Ethics also we have to

<sup>1</sup> 'Thou art that.'



borrow more from Buddhism than from Christianity, and that what is the case with Monism is equally the case with Pessimism; in other words, that Buddhism is the only religious system in which Pessimism serves expressly as the basis of Morality. Buddhism, indeed, is devoid of that instrument of complete redemption which Christianity possesses, but this redemption remains, in the latter system of Religion, precisely as external, as heteronomous as the moral law. In Christianity, just as the substance of Morality has been fixed once for all by the transcendental Deity on Mount Sinai without the participation of Man, and just as moral guilt (original sin) has been incurred once, for all human beings, by Adam the father of Mankind, so the Christian redemption from sin has been accomplished once for all on Golgotha, in behalf of all generations by a single, purely *external* act. As the heteronomous moral law has its psychological reflection in blind obedience, so the transcendental manipulation of the redemption is paralleled, psychologically, by blind faith; Man is no more a participator in the conquest of sin than he is autonomous in his moral life. Consequently, the pretended redemption can no more produce a real amendment and an elevation from the fallen state of sin, than external obedience to the law can produce a true Morality. The forgiveness of sins by a confessor and the dogma of justification by faith destroy the possibility of true moral degeneration, inasmuch as they, when put in the presence of the germs of really moral self-elevation, expel these germs like a foetus incapable of living, instead of letting them develop and ripen into living organisms.

Just as heteronomous Morality, as a means of propædæutic education for the masses, is of considerable use towards their acquirement of autonomous Morality, so also the calm afforded to the conscience by the belief in a justification obtained by foreign merit, and the amendment due to foreign help, may have their relatively historical justifiability. But, at the

present time, the question is whether we can keep up, by our own efforts, and carry out to the end, a self-reformation and moral improvement after a fall brought about by our own deed and not by that of another, in order that we may, in future, possess and firmly hold a possession acquired with much pain, as a moral capital which belongs peculiarly to us. This path is certainly harder and much more fatiguing than the easy bridge of an acquittal obtained by the merit of another ; but the serious task of self-reformation by means of a progressive moral discipline, will give us real results, and not mere imaginary consequences, such as the regeneration proclaimed by St. Paul, after which a man is found to have advanced in nothing but spiritual pride.

However, although Pantheistic Morality thus rejects the external and artificial expedients of redemption which are held out by Christianity, it does not, for all that, cease to be a *religious* system of Ethics ; whereas the humanitarian Morality of Liberal Protestantism, which has broken away from Metaphysics, is quite irreligious in character. Pantheistic Morality, by uniting itself with the Metaphysic possessing the greatest moral influence, rises to the height of religious Ethics, in a far more elevated sense than Christian Morality does. For the latter, whatever else it is, remains always a mere heteronomous pseudo-Morality, and can never reach the most profoundly metaphysical root of Morality, because the personal God of the Christians is not immanent in the Universe, but stands opposed to it as to a substance which he has created.

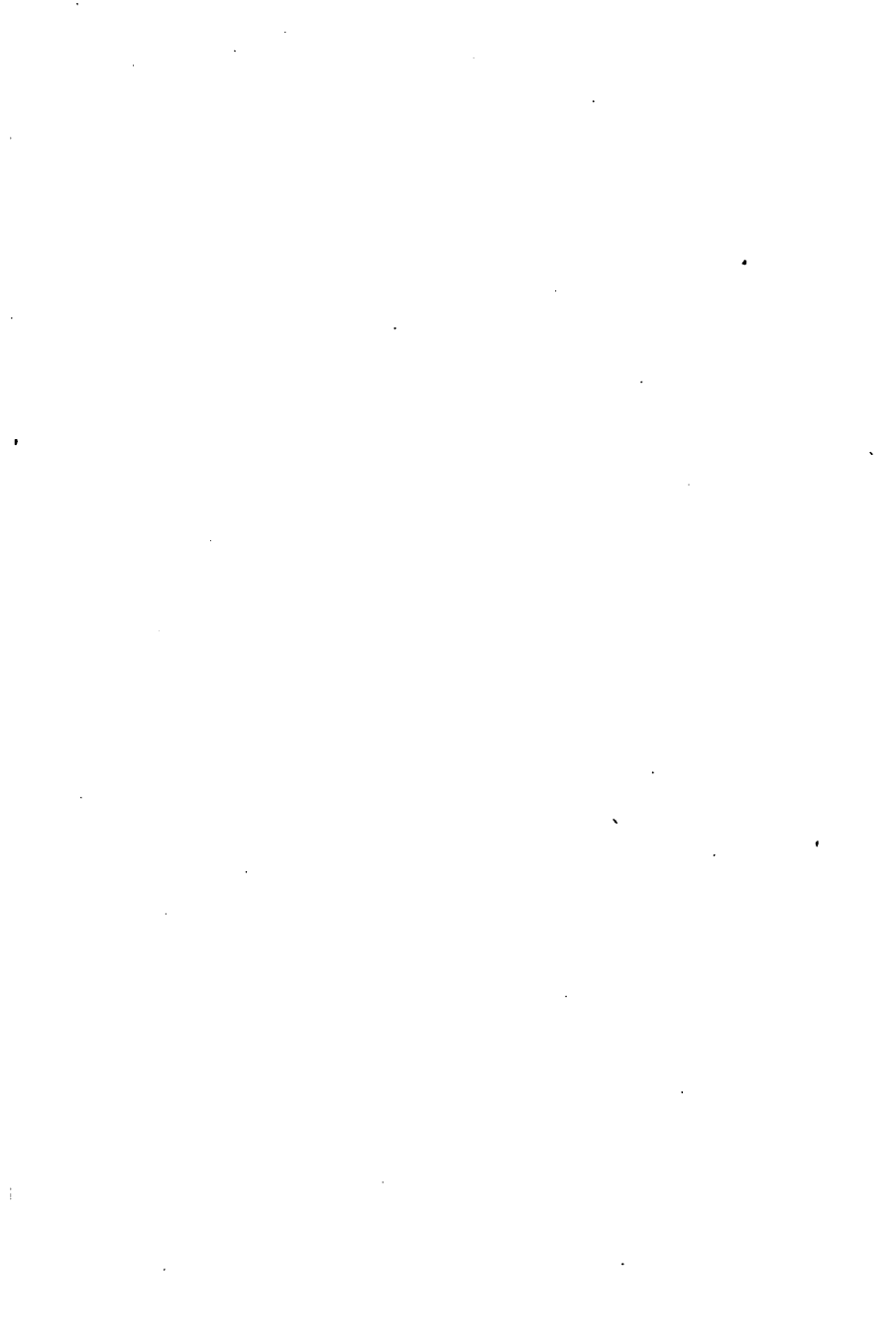
On the subject of religious worship very little can be said now except a few brief hints, since accident plays the greatest part in the choice of symbols and the form taken by devotional exercises. All we can affirm is that the cultus of the Religion of the Future must be more internal than that of existing Religions. The more a Religion loses of its essential substance and of its emotion-exciting power, the more external its worship will become. Nay, all religious reformers have

assailed the external form of worship which they found established, and have insisted upon an internal cultus. Jesus, also, though practically reducing all cultus to prayer, protested against public and common prayer, and recommended private prayer. We must not, therefore, find fault with Liberal Protestantism for cutting short the external forms of worship, but only for undermining the foundation of internal, religious cultus. If, as might be expected, the process of Development starts from Catholic uniformity, passes through Protestant sectarianism, and arrives at religious individualism which would harmonize particularly well with the German spirit, then we may argue, from this progress, that the Religion of the Future will have a cultus of a strictly internal character. As regards individual, internal cultus, in other words, for depth of religious feeling and of religious contentment, no Metaphysics, we repeat, can surpass Pantheistic Metaphysics, which offer the accomplishment of that which has been sought for and striven after by the mystics of all times and lands.

If, then, we consider the actual condition of Science, what appears to be most probable is that the Religion of the Future—if, in a general way, such a Religion be thought possible—will be a Pantheism, or, to speak more precisely, a Pantheistic Monism [all Polytheism being rejected], or else an impersonal, immanent Monotheism, whose Deity has his objective manifestation—the Universe—not outside himself, but within himself. But this is not furnished by positive Christianity with its polytheistic Trinity, nor by positive Protestantism with its abstract, Personal Theism. In accordance with the history of Religions, the object sought for now by us must be gained only by means of a synthesis of the two religious Evolutions,—the Hindu and the Jewish-Christian,—which constitutes a form uniting in itself the advantages of both, while eliminating their defects, and only in this way becomes capable of playing the rôle of a really Universal

Religion. A Pan-Monotheism of this kind would be the metaphysical system which would harmonize the best with Reason ; it would both the most energetically arouse and the most completely satisfy the religious emotions ; it would also lend to Morality the most firm support. Therefore it would approach the most nearly to that which the masses search for in Religion under the name of 'Truth.'









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